THE

# MODERN CHURCHMAN

By identifying the new learning with heresy, you make orthodoxy synonymous with ignorance.—*Erasmus.*

A State without the means of change is without the means of its conservation.—*Edmund Burke.*

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## IN MEMORIAM
## THREE NOTABLE ENGLISH MODERNISTS

By the EDITOR.

### BURNETT HILLMAN STREETER

1875—1937

The aeroplane crash in which Burnett Hillman Streeter ended his mortal life deprived the Modernist Movement in the English Church of one of its greatest personalities. Streeter's life was a succession of successes. It would seem that everything which he set out to accomplish he achieved. As a young man he secured three Firsts in the Oxford Honours Schools and became Fellow of Queen's College, and ultimately Provost. He held the Ireland Professorship of Exegesis and delivered both the Bampton and Warburton Lectures, and was elected a Fellow of the British Academy. In his earlier years, as an Oxford Tutor, he owed much to William Sanday, of whose Seminar on the Gospels he was a member. This led to the inclusion of two of his Essays in Sanday's valuable volume *Oxford Studies in the Synoptic Problem.* Streeter leapt into fame with the publication of *Foundations* in 1912, a volume of Essays dealing with Christian problems in the light of modern research. The seven essayists were Oxford scholars of the younger generation, and included William Temple, A. E. J.

Rawlinson, R. G. Parsons and Neville Talbot, who have since become bishops. Streeter edited the volume and also contributed its most courageous essay, 'The Historic Christ.' It caused a considerable stir, though less than that aroused by *Lux Mundi* and *Essays and Reviews*, its lineal ancestors. Streeter's views were deplored in ecclesiastical circles, and he lost an examining chaplaincy or two. Nevertheless Dr. Gore, who was then Bishop of Oxford, dared not accept Streeter's deliberate challenge any more than when he was Bishop of Birmingham he accepted that of Canon Hensley Henson. But John Percival, Bishop of Hereford, who feared the face of man as little as did John Knox, appointed Streeter a Canon Residentiary of Hereford in company with those other notable Modernists, Hastings Rashdall and A. L. Lilley. Streeter's duties in Hereford did not prevent him carrying on his influential educational work in Oxford, which became increasingly important owing to the resignation and death of Dr. Sanday.

As a Churchman, bent on modernizing the theology and spirit of the English Church, Streeter exhibited remarkable gifts of ecclesiastical strategy which, had he become a Bishop, still more an Archbishop, might have revolutionized our Church policy. He understood the arts of co-operation and leadership and had a quick eye for potential contacts and new lines of advance. The Church of England, however, had no post of influence to offer one so influential in his own College and University and in the religious world at home and beyond the seas.

Streeter, who loved students and was deeply interested in the Student Christian Movement, made several tours to the Far East, where his addresses and lectures as a Christian apologist were much appreciated by Chinese, Japanese and Indian students. The effect of this contact with the religious life of the Far East bore fruit in Streeter's Bampton Lectures, *The Buddha and the Christ*, which present the claims of Christianity as *the* religion of life. It was this close contact with young Christian students and their intellectual and moral difficulties which led Streeter to write his two most valuable volumes of modern Christian apologetic, *Reality* and *Adventure*. These two volumes had been preceded by three others, *Concerning Prayer*, *Immortality*, and *The Spirit*, written in co-operation with Cyril

Emett, Lily Dougall, Clutton Brock and others, and published during the period of the Great War. These five volumes of Christian apologetic have proved of immense service to thousands who, anxious to retain the Christian values and to lead the Christian life, were unable without discerning and courageous Christian leadership to overcome the well-nigh insuperable difficulties presented by traditional dogmas and conventional views. Undoubtedly Streeter's greatest book is *The Four Gospels*, as learned and judicious as it was fresh and original. It was this contribution to sound learning that secured his election to the British Academy.

As a Vice-President of the Modern Churchmen's Union and a Governor of Ripon Hall, Streeter was always ready when called upon to give practical help to Modernist activities, but he declined to waste his precious time in attending meetings concerned merely with pedestrian routine. The last paper he read at a Modern Churchmen's Conference was at Birmingham in 1934, when he dealt with 'Modern Criticism and the Synoptic Gospels.'

In 1934 Streeter came into close contact with the Group Movement. This was thoroughly characteristic of him. In the Group Movement he recognized, as in the Student Christian Movement, a form of Christian activity promising great results if properly handled. He never went into any movement without a clear idea of what that movement ought to achieve and of the part which he might play in helping it to accomplish its end. He recognized that perhaps the greatest need of the Group Movement was a sound modern theology of a simple and convincing type such as could be understood by and appeal to the ordinary man and woman. This Streeter attempted to provide in his Warburton Lectures, *The God Who Speaks*.

His personality was as influential as his writings. He had a genius for friendship. For him, life was fellowship. He was full of shrewd insight and excellent humour. He possessed great practical gifts: his reconstitution of the Chained Library at Hereford Cathedral is a good example of this, and those who know his college life could furnish many others. But Streeter never forgot the main purpose of his life, which was that of a pastor of souls. How far he was from the dry-as-dust don, if

such a person exists, is shewn by his writing a little book of moral and spiritual guidance for those taking the Oxford University examinations. For him the natural and the spiritual, the theoretical and the practical, in human life were one. He was no departmental man, but all round and many-sided, and it was this which accounts for his beneficial influence on all sorts and conditions of men and his readiness to be influenced by them, whether by the Sadhu or by Dr. Buchman. But though influenced, neither men nor theories could sweep him off his feet. In his Gospel studies he was as unable to adopt the extremes of Schweitzerian eschatology as he was to yield to much of the literary scepticism of the Form Critics.

The English Press has been full of laudatory obituary notices of him and his work, but none seems to us more marked by insight than that contributed by the Bishop of Birmingham to the *Manchester Guardian* of September 15th. We conclude with some citations from it:

> He was the best type of Modernist, learned, clear in thought and exposition, friendly, approachable, never bitter when unfairly attacked. His knowledge, his care, his genuine zeal for truth, which made him for a generation so distinguished a figure in the Modernist movement, are apparent to all who read his works. As a New Testament scholar he brought distinction to the Church of England: few of its clergy are Fellows of the British Academy. His instincts, if one may compare his conclusions with those reached during the last decade by such scholars as Guignebert in France or Bultmann in Germany, were conservative. Yet, in the brief bibliography of the most important of recent theological works prefixed to Loisy's *La Naissance du Christianisme* (1933), Streeter is the only Englishman mentioned. Just as the works of Lightfoot and Westcott were of dominant authority in England for a generation after they were published, so Streeter's *Four Gospels* (1924) and *Primitive Church* (1929) will probably for the next thirty years influence—and ultimately retard?—British New Testament scholarship.
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> His power over students and young people was to the end unabated. In the great days of the Student Christian Movement twenty years ago he and Dr. Glover dominated the gatherings at Swanwick, though they vied with one another in unassuming friendliness. Streeter's *Reality* (1926) was probably among the young the most widely influential of his books; and, if asked, he would tell with simple pleasure of the many languages into which it had been translated. He had no technical knowledge of science and the book would not always satisfy the expert. But as 'a new correlation of science and religion' it met the needs of students all over the world.
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> Of late Streeter had taken a close and active interest in the Group Movement. Some three years ago I had much talk and some correspondence with him as to this development. He was not blind to

dangers associated with 'sharing' and 'guidance.' But he was quick to point out that every great movement of the spirit had extravagances; St. Paul and John Wesley needed to exercise firm control over their followers. His book *The God Who Speaks* (1936) was regarded by some as showing his dissatisfaction with a purely intellectual approach to religion; to his friends it merely disclosed the religious certainty and fervour which had never been lacking. Yet religious earnestness did not make him dull; his humour was ever bubbling out. I remember his saying in the last long conversation I had with him: 'The fact that the ark rested on Mount Ararat is no reason why the leaders of the Church of England should always sit on the fence.'

Streeter was a man of intellectual distinction and was honoured by his University and College. He was a great religious force: did his Church acknowledge it? There is a mot that when a Modernist's name is suggested for important office in the Church the reply comes, if he is below the age of fifty-five, that his views are dangerous: if he is above that age, that he is too old to be a successful administrator. Whatever be the reasons for a bad tradition, it is doing harm to the Church. . . . Though Streeter could have filled with distinction virtually any office in the Church, he received no Crown preferment.

## PERCY GARDNER

1846—1937

The Modern Churchmen's Union has lost by the death of Professor Percy Gardner a Modernist no less distinguished than Dr. Streeter, but very different from him in many ways. He joined the Modern Churchmen's Union in its very early days, and was President from 1915 to 1923. His academic career was one of great distinction. He took First Classes both in the Classical Tripos and also in the Moral Sciences Tripos, and was elected a Fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge. He spent some sixteen years on the staff of the British Museum, and founded with others the *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, which he edited for many years. He held the Disney Professorship of Archaeology at Cambridge, and later succeeded Sir William Ramsay as Professor of Classical Archaeology at Oxford. Here he did much to promote the study of Greek Art and Archaeology and to secure its inclusion in the School of *Literae Humaniores*. He published a number of books on Greek Art and was the chief authority on Greek numismatics in this country. He became a Fellow of the British Academy and Corresponding Member of the Academies of Sciences, Prussia and Göttingen, and of the French Institute. But he had more pro-

found interests than classical art and archaeology. These were religion and ethics.

He had been brought up in a devout Evangelical home, described with charming simplicity in his *Autobiographica* (1934), but his studies in the Moral Sciences Tripos led him far away from traditional Christianity. He told the present writer, some years ago, that he believed that he was the only man living who had read every word of Auguste Comte's exposition of his Positivist Philosophy. Positivism, however, was unable to provide what Gardner's religious nature demanded. As the result, not simply of his studies, but of his own inner experience, he was becoming increasingly convinced that not only does man's social and political welfare demand religion but that it is also a necessity of his personal life. He became equally convinced that the highest form of religion is alone to be found in evolutional, not static, Christianity.

At this time he was philosophically much influenced by William James and the French Modernists, and so became a Pragmatist or Activist. In this respect he stood apart from the two other great Presidents of the M.C.U., Dean Hastings Rashdall and Dean Inge.

One of his most intimate friends was Baron Friedrich von Hügel, whose religious mysticism he shared. Yet with his religious mysticism and inflexible morality there went a perfectly free and open mind which was convinced of the need for scientific criticism as an important means of liberating mankind from superstition and error. His drastic application of historical and literary criticism in his fine book *Exploratio Evangelica*, a study of Christian origins, led those who did not really understand him to think of him as an unbeliever, though of a very peculiar type. I remember a younger member of the University saying to me : 'There is no one in Oxford who prays more and believes less than Percy Gardner.'

Canon Sanday, however, recognized the great contribution to Christian scholarship made by Gardner's volume, and in the *Journal of Theological Studies* welcomed it in a long review entitled 'An Eirenicon from Culture.' From this time onwards a succession of religious and ethical works proceeded from Gardner's pen. Of these, perhaps the three most valuable are

*The Growth of Christianity* (1907), *The Religious Experience of St. Paul* (1911) and *The Ephesian Gospel* (1915). Perhaps some of our readers may be more interested in his *Modernism in the English Church* (1926). He contributed many much appreciated articles to the *Modern Churchman*.

He valued highly the institutional side of the Christian life. He maintained the custom of family prayers and of regular attendance at public worship. He was for many years a member of the Vestry of St. Andrew's Church, Oxford, and at the same time a generous contributor to the Salvation Army, to whom by his will he left £200, as well as the same amount to Ripon Hall, of which he had been an interested Governor since 1919.

To those who knew him very well, he was cordial and even affectionate, but in manner he lacked the geniality of Dr. Streeter and the latter's extraordinary gift of associating freely with the young. Like Dr. Samuel Johnson, he did not appreciate jocularity, either in clergymen or in dons. He once complained of a striking episcopal portrait that it was 'too lively.' Life for him was dominantly a matter of duty to be done, and done without haste and without rest. He owed much to his devoted wife and after her death became increasingly lonely.

Gardner was not like some Modernists who seem to have no limitation. His austerity and sincerity made his limitations manifest. He liked Germans and Frenchmen, Swedes and Danes, but he did not like Americans, though he had lectured, so he declared, in thirteen American Universities. He did not believe in democracy nor in feminism, nor in increasing facilities for divorce. He was a Conservative in politics, a Puritan in morals, and in his manner a don of the old type who earned the reverence and loyalty of his pupils. To no layman does the Modernist cause in this country owe more than to him.

## HUGH RICHARD LAWRIE SHEPPARD

1880 — 1937

By the death of Hugh Richard Lawrie Sheppard, D.D., Companion of Honour, Canon Residentiary of St. Paul's, on the Eve of All Saints' Day, the Modernist cause has lost a supporter, not less influential, but entirely different from Canon

Streeter or Professor Gardner. Canon Sheppard was not a scholar. He was the most popular preacher in England and perhaps the ablest parish priest. Although a Cambridge man, he became Head of Oxford House, and a few years later Rector of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, Trafalgar Square. At St. Martin's he found a sparse congregation and the minimum of parochial organization. Most clergymen in his position would have felt, that as much was being accomplished as the circumstances permitted. The new rector's outlook was very different. By methods peculiarly his own, dependent as much upon his courage and originality as upon his extraordinary personal attractiveness, he built up a great and many-sided parochial organization : he filled St. Martin's to overflowing : he made it the best known parish in the British Empire and beyond. We remember witnessing in 1926 the attempt of the authorities of the pro-cathedral in Boston, Mass., to develop parochial activities on the lines of St. Martin's.

Dr. Sheppard was modernist in the very best sense of that term. He shewed this in the great breadth of his outlook, which was world-wide and forward glancing; in his many-sided sympathy, which was as intensely sincere as it was sensitive and laid on him immense burdens of nervous strain and self-sacrificing service. His letters were as amazing in their number as in their quality. It was, we suppose, his combination of insight and sensitiveness which enabled him to say the most difficult things in the supremely right way. His initiative and intrepidity were equally characteristic. He was the first clergyman, amid much criticism, to use the wireless to broadcast religious services. He opened his church day and night for all sorts and conditions of people, to be used not simply as a place of devotion but also as a place of shelter and rest. His Churchmanship was truly Catholic because it was essentially Christian. It recognized no denominational limitations whether doctrinal or sacramental. His parish magazine, *St. Martin's Review*, had none of the characteristics unfortunately possessed by parish magazines, but was from the first a most readable, enlightening, stimulating journal, read far beyond the sound of the bells of St. Martin's.

Canon Sheppard was for many years a member of the Modern Churchmen's Union, and wrote to its Editor : 'It is a

constant joke in my home that on the day when the *Modern Churchman* arrives each month I am practically out of action for normal affairs. . . .' On another occasion he brought the blushes of ingenuous shame to the Editor's cheek by thanking him for the 'Christian manner in which you wage your necessary controversies.' Quite recently Canon Sheppard, while retaining his membership, resigned his vice-presidency of the M.C.U. on the ground of the attitude of the *Modern Churchman* towards pacifism.

Pacifism for Canon Sheppard became as the years advanced the dominating interest of his life. He would have given his own life many times over to promote it. There can be few British people, unwillingly compelled to oppose pacifism, who have not honoured Canon Sheppard for the part he played in striving to advance it.

He took a prominent, indeed a leading, part in the rise and triumph of the 'Life and Liberty Movement,' but lived long enough to deplore many of the effects of his policy.

There was no position which he held that he did not adorn, ranging from the Chaplaincy of the Cavendish Club to the Deanery of Canterbury. There never has been an English clergyman more truly popular. We remember on a Sunday evening the normal frequenters of a country public-house sitting bare-headed in the bar listening to one of his wireless sermons. On another occasion we were rebuked by a printer whose ignorance we had assumed with the words, 'Sir, we all know Canon Sheppard.'

As an author his writings are not likely to be read in the years to come. They were directed to existing Church situations, but they carried weight mainly with those people who have no control of Church affairs — the growing multitude of indifferent and disgruntled Church folk. Some 90,000 copies of *The Impatience of a Parson* were sold within a few months of its publication, and we recall the case of a library in a small country town in which this book was the only religious work kept for circulation amid a mass of fiction.

No death, save that of a sovereign or a great political leader, can have brought a deeper sense of loss to British people than the death of 'Dick Sheppard.'

# SIGNS OF THE TIMES

## The Oxford and Edinburgh Conferences.

Much was published before and much has been published since the Oxford Conference of Life and Work and the Edinburgh Conference of Faith and Order met in the summer of this year. To assess results is not easy. Those who organized the Conferences; those who presided over them; those who framed their reports, resolutions and affirmations are, with very rare exceptions, optimistic—almost enthusiastic. Undoubtedly these Conferences were marked by a modern spirit of Christian courtesy and tolerance: the modern British atmosphere promotes these qualities. The Archbishop of Canterbury, in an admirably concise and lucid summary (published in the *Times* of Oct. 26), states that the Conferences met under a sense of crisis produced by the existing world situation and also under a sense of great opportunity to think out, in the midst of the things that were being shaken, how the things which cannot be shaken may be regained.

It seems to us that the spirit of urgency, courage and achievement which this situation ought to have secured does not characterize much that has proceeded from the Conferences. No doubt *Festina lente* is a sound motto, and the advice that we should strive to contemplate the events of everyday life against the background of the universal tendency deserves attention by those who are seeking to deal with a world situation. Nevertheless the driving practical power of the Conferences is less than might have been hoped for. It is indeed a time of crisis and of opportunity, and 'Now or never, now for-ever' is the motto for such a moment. It seemed to be too much taken for granted by the Conference leaders that, provided an advance was made upon the position registered by the Lausanne Conference of ten years ago (1927), all must be well. The advance appears to be hardly appreciable in the sphere of practical action, although in the less commensurable sphere of friendly feeling and mutual understanding very real progress was apparent.

It will be urged in defence of this slow progress that the divisions between many of the Christian Churches are very old

and run very deep. Old they certainly are: but they are not really nearly so deep as the adherents of those differences believe them to be.

> The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
> But in ourselves, that we are underlings.

There is nothing in the essential nature of the Christian religion nor in the essential nature of the present situation to divide Christians. Our divisions have been created by misunderstandings of the essential nature of the Christian religion and by our allowing the ghosts of dead controversies to haunt us. If the divided Christians who attend Faith and Order Conferences would all accept as basic the relation of Christian institutions to the Christian life as laid down by J. B. Lightfoot, that most learned and orthodox of prelates, in the opening paragraphs of his Essay on 'The Christian Ministry' a real harmonization of our ecclesiastical differences might be secured. Lightfoot wrote:

> 'The Kingdom of Christ, not being a kingdom of this world, is not limited by the restrictions which fetter other societies, political or religious. It is in the fullest sense free, comprehensive, universal. . . . It has no sacred days or seasons, no special sanctuaries, because every time and every place alike are holy. Above all it has no sacerdotal system. It interposes no sacrificial tribe or class between God and man. Each individual member holds personal communion with the Divine Head. . . .
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> Yet the broad statement, if allowed to stand alone, would suggest a false impression, or at least would convey only a half truth. It must be evident that no society of men could hold together without officers, without rules, without institutions of any kind; and the Church of Christ is not exempt from this universal law. The conception in short is strictly an *ideal,* which we must ever hold before our eyes, which should inspire and interpret ecclesiastical polity. . . .'

Unity in diversity can only be secured when all Christian institutions are regarded, not as ends in themselves, but as means created to serve Christian ends, and therefore as alterable from age to age in the interests of efficiency. It is the static conception of Christian institutions united to a false estimate of their absolute authority — as the *esse,* rather than the *bene esse* of the Church — which lies at the root of all our divisions in the sphere of ecclesiastical order. It is the static conception of Christian truth, combined with a false identification of the formulation of the truth with the truth itself, which is the cause of our divisions in the sphere of Christian Faith.

Most unwillingly, we are compelled to the conclusion that these fundamental positions were not recognized and affirmed by the Conferences as a whole. Such a crucial statement as that contained in 'An Affirmation of Unity' put forth by the Edinburgh Conference seems to us to be weakened by muddle-headed thinking and lack of moral courage.

> 'We are one in faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word of God. We are one in allegiance to Him as Head of the Church, and as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. We are one in acknowledging that this allegiance takes precedence of any other allegiance that may make claims upon us.
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> 'This unity does not consist in the agreement of our minds or the consent of our wills . . . We are one because we are all the objects of the love and grace of God, and called by Him to witness in all the world to His glorious Gospel.
>
> 'Our unity is of heart and spirit . . .'

What is 'a unity of heart and spirit' worth which is not based on 'the agreement of our minds or the consent of our wills?'

To the Thomist thinker who regards the Reason as supreme and the true master of the will, this utterance will seem mere verbiage. To the most advanced of modern psychologists it may seem to be a true description of personal experience. To the practical man it means that while the people who make this affirmation are convinced of the supreme importance of Christian unity and believe themselves to be loyal to the essentials of Christian experience, they are not prepared to make any immediate sacrifice of their denominational positions to secure oecumenical ecclesiastical unity. The *Affirmation* seems to us to be an essentially escapist document and may even be used as an opiate by our Church leaders until some great crisis wakes us up, probably too late, to the really terrible character of the existing Church situation.

The Bishop of Dornakal protested, as one in the front line, to the Edinburgh Conference that the divisions of Western Christianity were holding up the advance of the Christian Religion in the East.

> 'No children are happy if their parents are not on speaking terms. The problem is one of life and death to us: do not give your aid to keep us separated.'

Mr. Hugh Martin, in his admirable volume, *Edinburgh* 1937,[1]

[1] Edinburgh, 1937: The story of the second world conference on Faith and Order, by Hugh Martin. (S.C.M., 1937. 2/- net.)

commenting on the Bishop's appeal writes:

> 'The Bishop used an unforgettable illustration. He had been approached by the leaders of a large Hindu community which was being drawn towards Christianity. "But," they said to him, "in Hinduism we are one: in Christ we should be divided. So we hesitate." "What could I say?" the Bishop asked the Conference . . .' (p. 95).

The Conference leaders stressed the need for regional and local endeavours to secure unity, especially by educational means. Certainly there is much more need for local endeavour in this matter than exists at present; but local endeavour seems almost hopeless and helpless in view of the stand taken by the central ecclesiastical authorities even in England; if that local endeavour is aimed at securing sacramental unity. We are not allowed to invite our dissenting parishioners to Holy Communion unless they first consent to be episcopally confirmed, and we know that not one case in a hundred, or more probably, not one in a thousand, will agree to this. What, under these circumstances, is the use of inviting them to share with us in the Sacrament of Christian Unity? Yet our Prayer Book declares that it is

> 'a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another' (Article xxviii).

If we shew our love by being good neighbours, by co-operating in Christian educational, social and philanthropic endeavour, does it matter about uniting in fellowship at the Lord's Table? That is the question which, as a consequence of the policy of our English Church authorities, is being asked by many Christians in this land, and the answer they are giving is: 'It does not matter at all.' The unity which we have as good neighbours, good citizens, good members of the League of Nations, and so on, is what really matters to us as Christians. Agreement in our formulation of our doctrinal beliefs, agreement as to the best methods of Church Order, upon which Sacramental unity is made to depend by our ecclesiastical authorities, is very unimportant in comparison and, as we judge from the conclusions of the Oxford and Edinburgh Conferences,[2] unlikely to be accomplished before the Millenium. The Shepherds of the delectable mountains took their pilgrims up to an eminence whence, on a

[2] *Report of the Second World Conference on Faith and Order* (Edinburgh, August 3-18, 1937. Sent *gratis* to applicants). Cheyney Court, Winchester, England.

clear day, they might behold the Celestial City. The organizers of the Oxford and Edinburgh Conferences have presented their pilgrims with an extensive survey of the amazing number of problems and obstacles which beset the achievement of Christian unity and the manifold and complicated methods by which that unity may be ultimately accomplished. Yet perhaps the attainment of this unity is, at least in theory, the simplest thing in the world. '*If we walk in the light as He is in the light we have fellowship one with another.*'

## Modern China's Ideals.*

The recently received report of the Biennial Meeting of the National Christian Council of China held in Shanghai last May is of poignant interest at the present time. Perhaps the most significant paper read before the Conference was that contributed by Madame Chiang Kai-Shek, the wife of the Generalissimo. Its title is 'New Life from within.'

The theme of the Conference was the New Life Movement in China. Although the present war with Japan had not then begun, nor does it even seem to have been foreseen, a dominant note of the paper is a call to self-sacrifice and endurance in the cause of national reformation and progress. It is most definitely Christian in its convictions and is full of appreciation of the contribution made by Christian Missions to the intellectual, moral and spiritual welfare of the Chinese people.

> 'Many educational institutions under the direction of Christians have contributed greatly toward bringing New Life to thousands of students. The low cost of administration and the high quality of work in Christian schools, often maintained under difficult circumstances, have all left their mark upon the nation. In the matter of education let us not "grow weary in well doing" and give up with our work just half-completed. The Generalissimo and I both feel that a religious faith is essential to a well rounded life. Without it education is incomplete. The nation is in great need of leaders, in all walks of life, who have Christian ideals of service, and who live up to them.'

In her politics the reader of the paper is as definitely anti-Communist as she is anti-Fascist. As her utterance is really representative of China's leaders at the present time we quote *verbatim*.

> 'The Chinese people have always displayed a profound respect for personality. . . . The ideal society, according to the genius of our race,

* *Christian Co-operation in China.* N.C.C.C., 169 Yuen Ming Yuen Road, Shanghai.

is the "Golden Mean," the middle of the road. All manner of extremes are to be avoided.

'The totalitarian state will not meet with much response in China so long as it continues to exalt the state at the expense of the individual, and to crush personality in its fanatical drive toward establishing authority. The New Life Movement has definitely rejected all forms of regimentation as being opposed to the principles of Dr. Sun Yat-sen and as betraying the Chinese people into the hands of those, who, in their innermost souls, respect not personality, and the rights of individuals and groups.

'The Chinese people have always had a mind of their own and will continue to think for themselves. They can co-operate only with those who understand their culture, their sense of justice, and their love of freedom. Chinese society has within itself the germ of a new life, but it needs direction and a deeper religious faith. The new China will arise upon foundations already laid by our ancestors, and not upon the current "isms" of our age' (p. 37).

'It is in the soul that things happen.' Madame Chiang Kai-Shek is convinced that it is in China's soul and its 'new birth' that the source and strength of China's reformation and progress must be sought.

'The most important factor in reconstruction is the spiritual renewal of the people, and the improvement of their character. We cannot create the social life of the people, history has a long start of us in that, but it is within our power to regenerate it, and wholly transform it by breathing into it a new life.

'The beginning of the Christian life is really a "radical and permanent moral change wrought in the spiritual nature," and commonly referred to as the New Birth. "A change in the growing purpose, reformation of habits and life, and continuation by the Holy Spirit of new ways of living,' this is New Life from within and the right place to begin the regeneration of a nation.'

### Loughborough and the next Conference.

Many Modern Churchmen have felt strongly that the location of our annual Modern Churchmen's Conferences should not be restricted to Oxford and Cambridge. They have urged that these Conferences should be held in the great commercial and industrial centres. For a number of reasons connected with accommodation, accessibility, expense and such amenities as the vacation season demands, it has been found very difficult to secure a practical realization of these aspirations. Our first Modern Churchmen's Conference was held at Ripon and others have been held in Birmingham, Rugby, Bristol and London.

Next year it has been arranged to hold our annual Conference at Loughborough, in the northern Midlands. Loughborough is eleven miles north of Leicester, fifty miles from

Birmingham, forty-two from Northampton, thirty-five from Coventry, thirty from Rugby, seventeen from Derby, fifteen fom Nottingham and a little more than a hundred miles from London. Loughborough is a town of about 30,000 inhabitants with a noble parish church. Its bell-founding industry has a world-wide reputation, and within the last quarter of a century Loughborough has become a notable educational centre, mainly in the field of engineering.

Loughborough College, which comprises three Halls with every modern convenience, pleasantly situated in an estate of over a hundred acres, possesses some five hundred resident students and several thousand non-residents attending its classes, lectures and courses of technical instruction. It is in every way most suited for our purpose and we hope that the Modern Churchmen's Conference to be held there from the 5th to the 10th of September, 1938, will receive a very large measure of support. The theme of the Conference is 'Modern Christian Education,' and our President, Dr. Cyril Norwood, will deliver the opening address. Such a gathering should attract, not only many of the younger clergy, but also we hope a number of teachers of both sexes who are becoming increasingly convinced of the necessity for developing moral and Christian ideals and habits as a fundamental element in modern education, but are not clear as to the best methods of doing this nor what these Christian moral and spiritual ideals precisely are.

Dr. Norwood has just returned to England after a tour in New Zealand undertaken at the invitation of the educational authorities of that Dominion. *The Literary Guide* (the secularist organ in this country), in its issue for October criticizes adversely a statement made by Dr. Norwood at Christchurch in his recent tour. The statement criticized runs thus:

> 'To anyone, who thinks deeply, religion and education are inseparable. They are two aspects of the same living process. To make myself clear, I should define my terms and say what I mean by that. In its widest and simplest sense religion is the belief in the existence of God, conviction that the ultimate reality is spiritual, and that there is such a thing as the eternal life. By education I mean a preparation for life.'

It would be hard to find a better basis for the researches and discussions of our coming Conference than that set forth in the above citation.

# CHURCHMEN AND CREEDS

By R. Gladstone Griffith, M.A., Editor of 'The Modernist Series,' etc., Vice-Chairman of the Council of the M.C.U.

A CORRESPONDENT has recently told readers of the *Church of England Newspaper* that his conscience forbade him to recite certain words in the Nicene Creed and that therefore he resigned his office in the Church. 'This procedure,' he writes, 'has been strictly in accordance with regulations having lawful authority, and it would appear that only by resignation can any priest or bishop of the Church of England become morally *free* to pursue the truth and to teach the truth wherever such truth conflicts with the standard doctrines of the Church.' This extract from the issue of the *Church of England Newspaper* of October 15th serves to raise, if not necessarily to illustrate, the question of Modernists and their attitude to the Creeds. The suggestion that members of the Church of England are faced with a dilemma, which compels them to choose between obedience to the Church and loyalty to truth, provides a challenge to a thorough investigation of the position. But since the correspondent of the *Church of England Newspaper* did not explain what parts of the Nicene Creed offended his conscience, his case must be left on one side and attention given to the general situation with which Modernists are faced.

The creeds which have to be recited in church services contain statements which, taken literally, contradict the commonplaces of daily life. We no longer picture hell as a place beneath the world's surface or heaven as above the bright blue sky. Fewer and fewer people look forward to a resuscitation of the bodily elements which after death have been laid in the grave. Many who regard the Christian ideal as the only ideal of life reject without hesitation the hope of a visible second coming of our Lord and the story of the Virgin-Birth. Such things do not fit coherently into the mental picture which they have of the universe, as conceived in accordance with knowledge of the way in which things happen. Two assumptions are widely, if tacitly, held side by side: first, that Christ provides the one possible standard of religious belief and conduct; and, secondly, that the

miraculous setting of His life, as set forth in the creeds, cannot be taken literally and must be translated into current equivalents of thought.

Nobody, of course, expects all the clauses of the creeds to be accepted in their strict and literal sense, but many still regard belief in a miraculous and extraordinary birth as the equivalent of assent to the doctrine of the Incarnation; for to them the two are inseparable, and the issue appears simple and concise. Since the creeds have embodied the traditional beliefs of Christendom, Church people must be prepared to accept them unreservedly or else, if this contention is right, to sever their connexion with the Church. But things are seldom what they seem. Quite apart from the fact that the final effect of such a solution would be to reduce the Church of England to a small body of Fundamentalists, it will be seen that the genius of the Church of England, as revealed by the repeated directions of the Prayer Book, does not allow so simple and drastic a remedy. On the contrary, it imposes conditions which, if faithfully carried out, lead not to the expulsion of Christian people from the Church on account of their sensibility to the development of knowledge and to ripening scholarship, but to the necessity for a free interpretation of the creeds in harmony with the best modern thought.

In the Church of England creeds are not primary but secondary. The primary test of doctrinal orthodoxy has from the first been Holy Scripture. For Anglicans are concerned with the Prayer Book which acknowledges this authority. The Bishop of Chichester, for instance, to quote a recent and typical utterance, said to his Diocesan Conference :

> 'May I make it clear once again that it is the Prayer Book to which I ask the clergy to conform.'

Tacitly and explicitly appeal is made throughout the whole of our Book of Common Prayer to the Holy Scriptures. Priests at ordination are required to

> 'teach nothing, as required of necessity to eternal salvation, but that which (they) shall be persuaded may be concluded and proved by Scripture.'

Secondly, they undertake to be diligent

> 'in reading of the Holy Scriptures, and in such studies as help to the knowledge of the same.'

The Articles strike the same note:

> 'Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.' (Article VI.)
>
> 'It is not lawful for the Church to ordain any thing that is contrary to God's Word written, neither may it so expound one place of Scripture, that it be repugnant to another. Wherefore, although the Church be a witness and a keeper of Holy Writ, yet, as it ought not to decree any thing against the same, so beside the same ought it not to enforce any thing to be believed for necessity of Salvation.' (Article XX.)

The unique authority of Holy Scripture in the Church of England could not be more precisely and emphatically stated. The Articles and the vows at Ordination are central to the doctrinal position of the Church of England, and the general tenor of the Prayer Book is in constant agreement with them on the supreme importance of Holy Scripture as the final test of doctrine.

## II.

If it should be urged that the creeds provide a separate authority quite apart and distinct from that of the Bible, the direct answer and contradiction appears in Article VIII, which runs thus:

> 'The Three Creeds, *Nicene* Creed, *Athanasius's* Creed, and that which is commonly called the *Apostles'* Creed, ought thoroughly to be received and believed: for they may be proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture.'

The dependence of the creeds upon biblical proof is here categorically asserted. Not only does the Prayer Book place the final authority for doctrine in Holy Writ, but it goes further and plainly shows that the creeds depend for their authority upon scriptural proof, so that they stand or fall by their agreement with the Bible, and therefore whatever does not agree with it is irrelevant to the Faith. It is proper to point a clear distinction here. The Church of England does not permit this attitude towards the creeds as a possible and legitimate one, but it lays it down as correct for the clergy, who are bound to it by their ordination vows, and for those they teach by implication. So far from inability to accept every clause in the creeds, in its strict and literal sense, being a reason for resignation from Church membership, this critical attitude gives proof of fidelity to the fundamental and traditional principles of the Church of Eng-

land; for it springs from careful study and increased understanding of that authority which the Prayer Book declares to be its supreme test of orthodoxy. Those who are content to repeat all clauses of the creeds without attempting to reinterpret such as cannot claim support from Holy Scripture, when read in the light of assured scholarship, should consider again what is demanded of the clergy by the Church in whose name they are commissioned to preach the Gospel.

## III.

In view of the immense additions to common knowledge which have been made since the days when the Prayer Book took its present form and sanctions, it is clear that the direction of the Preface to the Ordination Services, to the effect that candidates for Deacon's Orders must be '*sufficiently instructed in Holy Scripture*,' implies knowledge of the results of literary and historical inquiry into the origins, nature and meaning of the biblical literature. The supreme importance of the Bible is made clear by the gift of the New Testament to the candidate at his ordination. When he comes to the priesthood he is again told by the Bishop to

> 'consider how studious (he) ought to be in reading and learning the Scriptures,'

and is asked whether he will be

> 'diligent . . . in reading of the Holy Scriptures, and in such studies as help to the knowledge of the same, laying aside the study of the world and the flesh?'

As might be expected, the consecration of Bishops brings out even more patently the place which the study of and insistence upon Scripture occupies in the Church and in the lives of its chief ministers. For they are asked by the Archbishop whether they are

> 'persuaded that the Holy Scriptures contain sufficiently all Doctrine required of necessity for eternal salvation through faith in Jesus Christ? And are (they) determined out of the same Holy Scriptures to instruct the people committed to (their) charge; and to teach or maintain nothing as required of necessity to eternal salvation, but that which (they) shall be persuaded may be concluded and proved by the same?'

It would be interesting to learn whether any one of the Bishops is prepared to maintain the literal truth of the story upon which the idea of the virgin-birth is based, in view of the verdict of scholarly research upon the subject. Every student

of religious literature knows the nature of the evidence. To reiterate the list of inaccuracies and inconsistencies, familiar to all who, in accordance with ordination vows, have made a serious effort to be diligent in the study of Holy Scripture 'and in such studies as help to the knowledge of the same' in regard to the opening chapters of *Matthew* and *Luke*, is to flog a dead horse. Historians and scholars, familiar with the development of religious mythology, are aware that the incorporation into the Christian tradition of elements taken from contemporary religious thought constitutes a process both natural and easy to follow. The contrast between Mark's relatively simple and vigorous picture of the Son of God who was yet truly the Son of Man, and the later conception which includes alien material, needs no emphasis to-day. St. Paul preached his gospel and founded his churches without reference to a virgin-birth, but, on the contrary, with passage after passage in his letters which invites such a reference yet consistently ignores it. The more detailed and the more comprehensive becomes knowledge of biblical literature, the more impossible is it to accept the literal story of a virgin-birth.

The vows taken at consecration, apart from other considerations, direct episcopal attention to the well-known results of biblical scholarship and to the bearing which these should have upon official teaching of Christian doctrine. For Bishops are asked whether they will

> 'faithfully exercise (themselves) in the same Holy Scriptures, and call upon God by prayer, for the true understanding of the same . . . ?"

They further undertake

> 'with all diligence, to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrine contrary to God's holy Word; and both privately and openly to call upon and encourage others to the same.'

If, admittedly, scholarship proves such a doctrine as that of a virgin-birth to have no historical basis in the New Testament, but to have been an apologetic or a poetical attempt to present the doctrine of divine sonship in terms of narrative, then loyalty to the Church of England demands that the clergy under episcopal leadership should make this plain to an age which is hungry for such enlightenment.

Popular education, cheap editions of sound literature, good libraries, the wireless and modern conditions of life in general have brought to ordinary folk a great deal of the information

which used to be the peculiar possession of the few. The thoughtless and those to whom religion means little may remain indifferent, but the solid core of thoughtful men and women who try to serve God in their generation are crying out for a presentation of Christianity which will satisfy their intelligence, and so make an appeal to the whole of their nature, and not only to the emotional and mystical side of it. Assurance that the story of the miraculous infancy arose as a pictorial and popular exposition of the profoundest doctrine of Christendom brings immense relief to those whose intellectual curiosity is as alert as their conscience, which makes them unhappy in the Church of England until official spokesmen inform the one and so reassure the other. This type receives less ecclesiastical attention than its number and quality deserve, for its very nature has hitherto driven it outside or else prevented its voice being heard inside the Church. But Dr. Donald Soper and others with experience of open-air preaching know well enough that such questions as those with regard to the virgin-birth and the physical resurrection must be answered without ambiguity, if confidence is to be restored, and spiritual help given to those who have needs which the Church so far has largely failed to meet.

The importunity of laymen on this matter, which finds expression when the preacher leaves the seclusion of the pulpit and gives the listener the chance to state his position, shows an appreciation of the first-rate importance attaching to the historical basis of Christianity. Ministers ought to be able to give accurate answers to inquiries connected with the development of Christian doctrine, and especially with regard to the life of the Founder of our religion. For an intelligible version of the fundamental doctrine of the Incarnation can only be built upon the fact that Jesus was in simple fact a human being, born of human parents; otherwise, He was not in all ways a typical man nor the real pattern which the creeds, rightly understood, have vigorously and continuously asserted that He was. The perfect manhood of Jesus is as essential to the Christian Faith as is the perfect Godhead. For upon these two together rests the doctrine of the Incarnation, which without one of them lapses into heresy. As always happens, faithful adherence to principles brings the Church face to face with obstacles which a policy of expediency

only increases. In the desire not to alarm the old-fashioned whose opinions have become fixed, the more virile and active-minded are repelled. On the very lowest and most worldly reckoning, the price is too great. On the higher level, the Church must feed, in the period of their growth and activity, those who hunger for spiritual truth expressed in plain language, without any reservation or beating about the bush. It is their right. To estimate the extent of this need would be equally easy and equally futile; for statistics are not forthcoming in the matter and could not be checked if they were. But its existence is only too familiar to Modernist clergy who strive to meet it, and to laymen who are rapidly losing patience at the failure of author ity to recognize the urgency of the situation.

## IV.

The purpose of this article will have been served if it has brought home to any Modernists who may have been in doubt, and to others who would not necessarily be willing to describe themselves so definitely, the plain fact that loyalty to the Church of England demands free, unfettered reinterpretation of creeds wherever they present, as an aspect of Christianity, what enlightened knowledge of Holy Scripture does not support. The recitation of creeds in the course of statutory services seems, on the face of it, to make strict and literal acceptance of all their clauses obligatory, and the moral problem is felt acutely by many Christian people. But they are not faced with the absurd dilemma which would compel them to choose the benefits of the Church without truth, or the benefits of truth without the Church — a situation to make the ungodly jeer! There is, however, no escape from the necessity for the Church of England to make up its mind, either to reinterpret its creeds, openly and unreservedly in accordance with assured biblical knowledge, or else to run the risk of disloyalty to its native genius for adapting itself to an ever-changing environment after the manner of all living things, and of express disobedience to the spirit of the Prayer Book, which enjoins in language which cannot be misunderstood the duty of setting forth Christian doctrine in the light of Scripture teaching, as unveiled by contemporary scholarship.

# OECUMENISM AND LIBERAL CHURCHES

By Frank M. Hnik, Ph.D., S.T.M.,
Reader at John Huss Theological Faculty, Praha.

## I.

### (Introductory Remarks)

LET me begin by apologising for the ugly but convenient word 'Oecumenism.' It is a useful word to describe the various endeavours that are being made for the unification of Christian Churches all the wide world over. Of its precise technical meaning I will speak later.

Such endeavours for the unification of the diverse Christian Churches are among the important cultural characteristics of the twentieth century. They are a partial fulfilment of a poet's noble vision :

> 'O living Church ! thine errand speed,
> Fulfil thy task sublime :
> With bread of life earth's hunger feed,
> Redeem the evil time.'

The oecumenical movement has already reached the greater part of the Christian world, and it is especially active in the non-Romanist Churches. These non-Romanist Churches put emphasis, not on the former idea of isolated and independent activity, but on the need of mutual understanding. Where formerly different dogmatic convictions produced rivalry, and sometimes hostility, there comes now to the front a tendency to seek for and to unfold the nature of the different theological attitudes involved in the fundamental principles of Christian truth. It is a most encouraging fact that the majority of the Churches have abandoned their former isolation.

The mutual relations of the Christian churches are determined in these newer days by different moral standards than those which were dominant in previous centuries. One great stream of the oecumenical movement has devoted itself to the problems arising from the application of Christian principles to social life. This is specially characteristic of the 'Stockholm

Movement,' which is represented by the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work. There is also the 'Lausanne Movement,' which deals with controversial questions concerning Church Faith and Order. Concurrently, Protestant, Orthodox and Anglo-Catholic are striving for a better understanding of their differences in respect to dogma.

Oecumenism within the Christian Churches found its opportunity through the growing spirit of toleration : and by the philosophical discussions on the subject-matter of religious faith. The Churches became more and more aware of their common duty of challenging the community with a common spiritual message which might save the world for God.

These endeavours after a united Christian Church prove to be working upon some of the principles which have been propounded and fought for by pioneers of Religious Liberty. The principle of Comprehension of different religious convictions within a single group : the principle of Balance between traditional faith and the demands of a juster social order : the principle of Appeal to religious experience to test religious truth — all of these principles have been for generations the aims of religious liberalism. They now gain a partial recognition within the field of the oecumenical movement. I found a confirmation of this fact recently in a semi-official publication issued on the occasion of the Conference on Church, Community and State. It is frankly admitted there that at present the oecumenical movement is something only slightly more than an international humanitarian tendency towards spiritual unity.

The problem of the value of the oecumenical movement for us who are gathered in this Conference of the International Association for Liberal Christianity and Religious Freedom has, I beg to submit, become one which deserves treatment at an ecclesiological section of our Conference such as the present occasion. For Liberal Christianity cannot be defined or discussed without some consciousness and definition of its relation to the Universal Church.

Once it used to be said that some Christian groups give a place to Theology in the Church, while other groups are satisfied with offering the Church merely a place within the dogmatic system. In Liberal Churches we often meet with an aversion to

ecclesiastical Institutionalism, and to any systematic treatment of the basic Christian doctrines. This aversion ought not, however, to lead to any underestimation of the significance of Truth in Religion. We have to reflect upon the relation of Liberal Christianity to the oecumenical movement as it actually is, and as it ought to be and might be. We have to take into account the diversity of the systems of thought in the Christian Churches, and to remember the inertness of the majority of their members. There must therefore be some critical caution in accepting the claims to unity. But in spite of all this, Christian oecumenism should be treated as a serious and significant problem.

I am afraid that a speaker from the Czechoslovak Church may make the problem appear still more complicated. For this Church has a more positive relation to the oecumenical movement than most of the member-groups of the I.A.R.F. It co-operates with the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work and with the World Alliance for International Friendship. In addition it is represented at the Continuation Committee of the World Conference on Faith and Order. For the given subject, therefore, a speaker from the Czechoslovak Church is in a somewhat disadvantageous situation. Whereas in the eyes of the Orthodox people he may seem an aberrant Liberal, to an audience of Liberals he may seem to bear the *stigmata* of orthodoxy. I shall not be surprised, then, if objections are raised against my presentation of the topic.

My paper consists of three parts. First, I shall expound the fundamental features of the oecumenical movement. Next, I will try to explain what are the presuppositions for co-operation in the oecumenical enterprises, from the point of view of Liberal groups. And then, finally, I shall explore the value of the oecumenical movement for the member-groups of the I.A.R.F.

## II.

### (The Aims of Oecumenism)

The adjective 'oecumenical' has had a different meaning in different times. Originally it was applied to the population dwelling in the inhabited part of the globe. Later on it received a political meaning; the word 'oecumenical' was used to signify

the people belonging to the Roman Empire. The adjective did not get its specific content until the end of the Classical Period. Then it came to be used for the Articles of Faith accepted by the first seven Church Councils.

For the modern era the word 'oecumenical' signifies the complex of tendencies which, beyond the differentiation of Christian communities, discover a deeper unity of the Church of God, growing from the spiritual roots of the Gospel of Jesus.

As a matter of fact, practically all the larger Christian bodies, with the exception of the Roman Catholic Church, co-operate nowadays in the oecumenical movement. It is well known that the Romanist Church refuses participation in any attempts to achieve unification with the other Churches. The authorities at the Vatican acknowledge only their own efforts to attain to a status of unity through the medium of so-called unionism. Viewed from the Roman Catholic conception of comprehension, unity of the whole of Christendom postulates an obedient return of the erring sons and daughters, from whatever heretical communities, to the one true and pre-established harmony of faith and order incorporated into the sacramental and hierarchical organization of the Church of Rome.

The Anglican Church is without any doubt at present the main pillar of Christian oecumenism. This is not due merely to the fact that it has among its ranks the most capable representatives of aspirations tending to federalistic catholicity. We must not forget that the Anglican Church united within its own structure, with a wonderful foresight for organic co-operation, followers of both Catholic, Evangelical and Modernistic traditions. This broadminded comprehensiveness for the varieties of Christian outlook make it possible for Anglicanism to understand better the relative validity of different doctrinal conceptions than could be expected from any other Church community.

From the methodological point of view it may be noted that independent and important work was done by two separate organizations; two organizations which will probably in the near future be governed by a joint administrative centre and entitled 'The World Council of Churches.'

The Stockholm movement, on the one side, made from its very start a conscious effort to divert the attention of Christian

Churches to the problems of public and international life. Dogmatic questions were to be left outside of its working programme. Later experience has shown, however, that the central Christian doctrines cannot be ignored altogether. The main concern of the Stockholm movement remains even now focussed on the issue of the practical consequences of Christianity to be realized in contemporary society. The social teachings of the main Christian communities should not be neglected. On the other hand, the World Conference on Faith and Order, representing the Lausanne Movement, is charged with the task of stating clearly the agreements and differences of a doctrinal nature between the Churches which claim allegiance to Christ as the Son of God, the Lord and Redeemer of the whole of mankind.

The Conferences of these movements, held at Oxford and at Edinburgh this summer, are being accompanied by a few remarkable experiences. The oecumenical movement is carried on by the Christian religious communities which believe in one holy Catholic Church, enlarging in the scope of its mission the task undertaken by individual Churches. The conception of the social function of the universal Church of God is different in various Churches. In spite of that, however, the Churches participating in the oecumenical movement emphasize the unique significance of the supranational religious fellowship which has Jesus Christ for its Lord. The Church is put forward as a divine institution. The Universal Church does not exhaust its influence merely in its historical bearing upon human society; oecumenism fosters the conviction that no individual Church can solve of itself the oecumenical problem in all its implications. At the same time the search after unity renews the Churches' consciousness of their own worth. The Churches become more strongly aware of their responsibility for saving the world from diabolic forces. They realize their duty to contribute substantially to the renaissance of the Christian moral order, derived from the commandments of love as they were embodied in the personality and teaching of Jesus Christ.

By virtue of their being organized as meetings of officially appointed representatives, both the oecumenical Conferences of this summer acquired a special significance, which gives them the right to speak on behalf of a greater part of the Christian

world. There is no need to overestimate their importance for the Churches themselves and for the general public. The Churches made no proposal to achieve amalgamation. Nevertheless, a new will to friendliness is being promulgated through these Conferences. And this will to friendliness becomes a presupposition for the formation of a united front of the Christian Churches, to be achieved in the future.

The Churches realize that the division of the Christian world into a large number of divided groups and sects is a handicap in the work of overcoming the evil of human society. The call for a new Church strategy sounds louder than ever before. Its purpose is seen in the first place in the preparation of friendly approach of various Churches in individual states, and then in the whole of Christendom. For the time being it is understood that the existing differences in matters of doctrine and of organization cannot be easily removed. Nevertheless round-table discussions of common convictions and disagreements are expected to mitigate many prejudices. Personal contacts of delegates will hope to overcome that superiority complex which is often strong in the Churches. Through oecumenism one Church learns from others to penetrate into the wider scope of the religious life of Christianity as a whole. Individual Churches learn to understand better the meaning of different theological points of view than they would have done in their isolation. Many of them are also willing to enrich themselves by every courageous expression of social aspiration and achievement if it is based on the spirit of service, mercy and forgiveness. To a great number of Churches the Christian Cosmos, looked at through the oecumenical kaleidoscope, appears as a rich and living reality.

Painstaking research was going on concurrently with the oecumenical conferences at Oxford and at Edinburgh. History can scarcely know any other religious convocation accompanied by a more intensive and elaborate plan of preliminary investigation. Hundreds of fellow-workers from the ranks of the clergy as well as of the laity were secured as collaborators. This underlying research work is an additional reason why we should give the oecumenical enterprises the credit which they deserve.

## III.

### (Oecumenism from the standpoint of the Liberal Churches)

Two main theories are used to explain the essence of oecumenism. The first is the Unification Theory. The Unification Theory starts from the efforts to maintain a close co-operation of the Churches because of their common mission in the world of to-day. Endeavours after unity are based on the conception that the existing Churches are thought of as branches of one universal Church of God. The structural unity of this Catholic Church is regarded as being not entirely destroyed, in spite of existing divisions between the particular Churches. Initiative, aiming at the unifying endeavours, comes, according to this theory, primarily from believers themselves. We are told that the oecumenical movement can reach a real success only so far as, in all Churches, devoted people are won for the ideal of Church unity.

For the achievement of this aim good machinery is a matter of primary concern. Oecumenical institutions are to be established to direct the study of problems emerging from the search after unity, and to disseminate the results acquired by this study. This theory emphasizes the substantial unity of the individual Churches with the higher body of the universal Church. The parallel self-respect of the individual Churches springs up from the feeling that every one represents an organic branch of one tree, of one universal Church of God, looked upon as a whole.

Many objections have been raised against the co-ordinating principle of the unification theory. One of them is often repeated, namely, that this theory elevates too much the creative possibilities of human enterprise. It is pointed out that neither the Christian people as individuals nor the Christian communities can achieve Church unity by their zealous desire. Oecumenism is said to be in danger of becoming lost in the romanticism of humanitarian thinkers. Furthermore, it is argued that fundamental postulates of Christian truth ought not to be sacrificed to a unity which is only fictitious. The critics of the unification theory also remind us that we must not forget this very import-

ant point, namely, that the leading Christian denominations are promoting different views even with regard to the function of the Church in the world. It was often repeated in the last few weeks: 'Let the Church be a Church.' The chief function of the Church is regarded, by the group of critics of the unification theory, as the proclamation of God's demands with regard to His creatures. They then find the main task of the existing Churches to be the bringing about of Christ's rule over the kingdoms of this world.

The second theory of the essence of oecumenism is the Charismatic. In this theory there is given an emphasis on the act of divine grace by which the reunion of Christendom may be achieved. The charismatic theory discovers, behind the concrete diversity of individual Christian groups, an ideal reality of one holy, catholic Church of God. Ἐκκλησία τοῦ Θεοῦ, this Church of God, is not equated with a mere eschatological dream, the consummation of which may be expected at the end of this world. In the light of the charismatic theory the oecumenical efforts bear witness to the fact that God's Church is building up her work already now.

According to this second theory, God's Church means, of course, much more both ontologically and metaphysically than the particular Churches. The universal Church, within and beyond the partial Churches, is bidden to make their charismatic quality primary. As such it is viewed as a direct consequence of God's activity in the world. At the same time it predisposes to the comprehension of God's sovereign rule over mankind.

Nobody denies that it is difficult to state the criterion by which the existence of this grace-possessed Church of God within the body of empirical Christian communities could be recognized. Neither one common confession of faith, nor a universally accepted ecclesiastical organization, nor even a similar type of worship constitute such a criterion. On the contrary, just in these characteristic features the Churches differ from one another. And yet it must be admitted that the universal Church of God remains an object of Christian faith throughout the whole of Christendom. Even to-day the principle *Ubi Christus, ibi ecclesia* (Where Christ is, there His Church is also) holds true. Therefore the oecumenical movement may be welcomed

as a slight contribution to Church unity. The charismatic theory puts emphasis on the conviction that God Himself will decide upon the manner, the time and place of final unity. It is man's business to pray and to be prepared to welcome the divine institution. An admonition is expressed in this connection : Christian Churches must not fall into the temptation of priding themselves that this unity will be brought about by their poor human means.

What is, then, the relation of the International Association for Liberal Christianity to the oecumenical movement? Which dominant attitude prevails in our groups with regard to the endeavours for the unification of Christian Churches?

Two reasons prevent us from considering I.A.R.F. as a direct part of oecumenical enterprises. In the first place, the Association could not be invited to direct co-operation with the Lausanne and Stockholm movements, as these primarily consist of official representatives of Christian Churches. The second reason is even more serious : our groups have not achieved an identical attitude towards these unifying endeavours. I think that I am right in saying that nearly all member-groups of I.A.R.F. co-operate in some way with the Orthodox Churches at the World Alliance for International Friendship. This Alliance is not, however, a direct part of the oecumenical movement. Its main concern is devoted to the promotion of international understanding on questions of political disputes. This co-operation through the World Alliance meant an important starting point for attaining an even more far-reaching spiritual solidarity between various nations.

We must look for an answer to the question why the majority of liberal groups do not collaborate in the Shockholm and Lausanne movements. The explanation is to be found in the tense relations between the Orthodox and liberal Churches — a result of the differences of doctrine. Liberal Churches were becoming only gradually aware of the significance of oecumenism. Their scepticism in regard to the unifying endeavours was not without ground. At the same time the Orthodox Churches were generally in no hurry to invite the liberal groups to co-operation in the task of the reunion of Christendom. The Czechoslovak Church, being a new institution, was in a more favourable position. There were no resentments from the past which would

have hindered its oecumenical collaboration. Moreover, the Czechoslovak Church was not yet dogmatically crystallized at the time when invitations to the Stockholm and Lausanne Conferences were sent out. In other cases liberal Churches were only rarely requested to co-operate. British Unitarians were officially represented at the Oxford Conference of the Stockholm movements last July.

As a matter of fact, the attitude of the liberal groups to oecumenism was rightly expressed by our President, Dr. Alfred Hall, when he responded to the Secretariat of I.A.R.F. in the following way: 'Co-operation with the oecumenical movement is desirable as far as it can be achieved. But it has become clear that liberals are not considered orthodox enough to be invited.'

The present situation seems to indicate that the door to co-operation will remain open to our groups within the sphere of the Stockholm movement. Here the liberal Churches have a chance to contribute their visions for the solution of urgent social problems *sub specie evangelii*. They can also pay their tribute to the common action aiming at the Christianization of modern culture. With regard to the Lausanne movement the relation of our groups is much more complicated. Direct co-operation will be possible only in rare cases. I am convinced, nevertheless, that the member-groups of I.A.R.F. should acquaint themselves with the results of the Conference on Faith and Order. They will then see, in a better light, the spiritual foundations of the Christian Church. It is always preferable to cultivate a learned ignorance than to be *a priori* satisfied with unenlightened prejudice.

## IV.

### (Concerning the Value of Oecumenism)

From the point of view of the liberal Churches, the unification theory of oecumenism will be more acceptable than the charismatic theory. Religious liberalism always insists on the significance of the human factor in religious life; and this theory corresponds better to our way of thinking. There is no doubt a good reason why the orthodox circles blame the unification theory because of its striking similarity with humanitarian ambitions.

In their typical outlook liberal groups appreciate the following specific values of humanitarian Christianity :

First : Respect for the personality of individual believers.

Second : Tolerance of opinions of others when they deviate from our opinions.

Third : Recognition that doctrinal tenets other than those of free Christianity may be morally justified.

Fourth : Freedom of conscience for every man ; a principle which would guarantee a right of faith reached on the basis of personal religious experience.

The leading organs for Christian reunion pay considerable respect to these liberal principles. At the same time they are limiting their validity with regard to the main traditions of historical Christianity. Oecumenism takes for granted nowadays differences in the expression of Christian doctrine. And it does not reject variations of opinion concerning the practical application of the moral teaching of Jesus to contemporary society. Oecumenical enterprises presuppose, however, at least a minimum of common agreement. The Churches must really aim at the reunion of Christendom on the basis of the Gospel of Jesus, to which a normative value should be attributed. The oecumenical movement is an inspiration to liberal groups as far as they recognize their duty of promoting Christ's spirit and their duty of preparation for the forthcoming of the Kingdom of God on earth.

Oecumenism did not repudiate a series of positive values esteemed in religious liberalism. It rejects, however, the negative tendencies of Liberalism. Liberal sects, as far as they are pretending to form a new kind of religion, or a new type of morality, logically contradictory to the fundamental values of the Gospel of Jesus, exclude themselves automatically from the scope of Christian catholicity. Any such group which would consider the religious content of the classical Christian tradition as merely a piece of the outworn past, and which would regard the historical Churches as instruments to keep backward people in their ignorance, would be certainly not welcome as an ally in the cause of reunion. I do not suppose it would even wish to be a part of it. On the other hand, no liberal group which desires

to contribute to the unity of the Church can remain permanently excluded from the universal fellowship of the followers of Christ. The oecumenical movement cannot sacrifice the principle of truth to the conquest of unity. There are no doubt as many Christian interpretations of truth as there are currents in contemporary theology. Nevertheless, there is only one divine truth. The oecumenical movement is striving after acquaintance with the content of this truth. In so doing it maintains the hope that with the help of God the unity of the Church will finally be achieved.

If the liberal groups wish to understand the meaning of oecumenism they must not cling to the inherited prejudices against the so-called orthodox reactionaries. They must free themselves from the superstitious idea that lack of definiteness and negativity in matters of faith are touchstones of religious progress. They should apply the principle of tolerance not merely towards atheists, but as well towards those people who believe in the premises of historical dogma. In measuring their religious values by the aims of oecumenism, liberal groups must decide whether to them God is a reality or a mere phantom of the mind.

The member-groups of I.A.R.F. often suffer from a hypertrophy of fear. They live under constant tension because they want to seem 'modern' and 'rational.' A great deal of the activity of our liberal groups is anxious to appear as the *dernier cri*. They wish to make their standpoints at least a plausible reflection of scientific theories, philosophical hypotheses and aesthetic moods which are fashionable for the time being. Often we oppose too strongly the fetishism of words in our comprehensions of the world invisible. We are afraid of the inclusiveness of unfamiliar religious attitudes. Therefore we often lose from our sight many treasures of religious consciousness embodied in the faith in God of all men and revealed in Jesus of Nazareth.

Oecumenism offers precisely in this respect its substantial contribution to the Liberal groups. It teaches them to estimate the significance of the underlying unity of the basic religious convictions, realized and longed for by the Christian communities throughout the world. It makes us marvel at the richness of

Christian religious tradition, which is by no means so void of spirit as we perhaps may have thought at the first sight. A new opportunity is offered to the liberal groups through the medium of the oecumenical movement: we can claim our allegiance to the universal Church even while we keep our special modes of doctrines, worship and administration.

In so far as there are vestiges of the Spirit of Christ left in the liberal groups, they should try to achieve at least some degree of understanding with the Orthodox Churches. Oecumenism has taken over from the religious liberals the principle of tolerance. Why could not, then, free Christianity learn something from the Orthodox? Why should we not acknowledge on our side the need of a new balance between eternal and temporal aspects in religion?

Attempts at a closer co-operation among Christian Churches are reminding us how justified was the clear vision of William Ellery Channing with regard to the universal Church. I close this discourse with his words:

> 'I do not condemn the union of ourselves to these or any other churches whose doctrines we approve, provided that we do it without severing ourselves in the least from the universal Church. On this point we cannot be too earnest. We must think no man the better for belonging to our communion, no man the worse for belonging to another. We must look with undiminished joy on goodness, though it shine forth from the most adverse sect. The angels and pure spirits who visit our earth come not to join a sect, but to do good to all.'

# BOOK REVIEWS

## ROBERT FORMAN HORTON*

The subject of this biography was for many years known to the church-going public as the minister of Lyndhurst Road Congregational Church, Hampstead, one of the largest, most influential, and most generous congregations in London.

The writer of this review never met Dr. Horton personally. In 1905 he heard him preach in Mansfield College Chapel, Oxford—and was less impressed by the Congregational minister than by the Unitarian preacher, Dr. James Drummond, whom he had heard a Sunday or two before in the neighbouring chapel of Manchester College. In 1917 when serving as an army chaplain the writer was impressed by the interest taken by Dr. Horton

* *Robert Forman Horton.* By Dr. Albert Peel and Sir John Marriott. (George Allen and Unwin. 10/6. 1937.)

in the young men of his congregation serving in the forces. Otherwise his knowledge is limited to the reading of this biography and of what was perhaps Dr. Horton's most important book, *Revelation and the Bible*.

The story recorded in the biography may be summed up as follows. Robert Horton was born in 1855, the son of a Congregational minister in easy circumstances; at the unusually late age of sixteen he went to Shrewsbury, where he did well both as a scholar and as an oarsman; he was not altogether happy, presumably because his spiritual development was far in advance of the average public school prefect. In 1874 he went to New College, Oxford, with a classical scholarship and fulfilled the promise of earlier days by two 'firsts,' a place in the college eight, the presidency of the Union, and a fellowship. From 1879 to 1883 he divided his time between lecturing at Oxford and preaching to a newly formed congregation at Hampstead; at the end of 1883 he decided that his life's work must be that of a minister not of a don; accordingly he settled at Hampstead and until 1930 ministered to the congregation that built the large church in Lyndhurst Road in 1884. In 1892 the publication of *Revelation and the Bible* drew upon him the wrath of many Congregationalists who (like most members of most churches at that time) based their faith on the verbal inspiration of the Bible, though his own congregation do not seem to have been seriously disturbed. Meanwhile from time to time he attracted attention by his advocacy, earnest if not always discreet, of causes commending themselves to a Free churchman of liberal political views. His ministry lasted until 1930 and like many another minister of a church formerly well filled, he experienced the depression of the dwindling congregations of the post-war period. In 1930 he retired and four years later he died.

The story of his early years and of his fifty years' pastorate is told by Dr. Peel, a well-known minister of his own communion; the period divided between Shrewsbury and Oxford is recorded by Sir John Marriott, an Anglican and Conservative who for fifty years valued the friendship of a Congregational minister who never disguised his political liberalism. Sir John Marriott also contributes the last two chapters which show a delicate appreciation of his friend's ideals and the source of his power. The impression left by this biography on one who did not know Dr. Horton personally is hard to describe. With the wide culture of an Oxford don Dr. Horton seems to have blended a certain amount of somewhat harsh Puritanism; he risked his theological reputation in 1888-92 by his defence of Biblical criticism, but he had little sympathy with critics whose conclusions led them to less 'orthodox' positions; his intellectual brilliance was at times concealed by an emotionalism which led one of his former assistants to describe Lyndhurst Road church as a 'hothouse'; his belief in prayer as leading to a direct answer to a specific petition is likely to puzzle and perhaps repel many who do value the habit of prayer. Again some will note the contrast between the 'assurance' of his preaching and the depression revealed in extracts from his diary; this contrast, however, is not abnormal, for probably all preachers whose sermons call for a severe

emotional effort experience a reaction that may take the form of depression and even of doubt.

Theologically Dr. Horton belonged to the generation that followed such preachers as Spurgeon and Parker, preachers who felt no doubts about the verbal inspiration of the Bible and the certainty of eternal punishment for the impenitent. Horton deviated from such 'orthodoxy' but 'he belonged to a generation of Congregationalists to whom Unitarianism was anathema' (p. 240). Before his death there developed an element in his own communion which, in the words of a well known Congregationalist, 'derives its ancestry not through Wittenberg or Geneva but from the so-called Age of Reason'; against this rationalistic element another group within the same communion emphasise their descent from Geneva, but it is doubtful whether they would welcome Dr. Horton's somewhat unrestrained emotionalism in his presentation of the Gospel as understood in the Reformed churches. Dr. Horton belonged to the late Victorian age, the period from 1870 to 1914 which has lately been described as the most religious age in English history. He admitted that he could not understand the 'godless and unworshipping generation' of post-war days; and perhaps many a minister thirty years his junior but brought up on the traditions of the Victorian age shares his discomfort. To say that he belonged to an age which, alas, has passed away is no disparagement; and as he puts down this biography the reader will perhaps agree with the present writer that, while he could not have made his spiritual home at Lyndhurst Road, he has been reading the record of an outstanding representative of earnest and cultured 'Dissent,' an element which has made, and is still making, a large contribution towards the varied religious life of a nation that has not yet renounced the obligations of the Christian religion.

J. F. Clayton.

## A GERMAN PROTESTANT ETHIC*

A mass, not only of learning, but of vigorous independent thought has gone to the making of this book. It is throughout thought-provoking, and sometimes provoking. It convincingly challenges current ethical teaching at many points, and provides materials that will form the substance of many sermons. But often the challenge goes beyond reasonableness: no compromise is allowed in the denunciation of asceticism, mysticism, capitalism and Catholicism. The reviewer is probably not alone amongst thoughtful Christians in thinking that one or more of these are at least not incompatible with Christianity.

The strength of the book lies in the fact that it faces the reality of sin in the world—this world in which we have to live. Our conduct cannot be such as it would be in a sinless world. We cannot here and now practise the ideal to which we look. 'It is not possible for the individual to engage in economic activity without sin.' 'Just as there are only sinful human

* Emil Brunner: *The Divine Imperative, A Study in Christian Ethics.* Translated by Olive Wyon. (Lutterworth Press. 25/-. 1937.)

beings, there is only sinful marriage.' These are sayings which contain truth in spite of their harshness. It is only by boldly facing the fact of sin, and then welcoming God's redemptive grace, that we can see the way in which the wrath of man can be turned to His praise. It is a pity, however, that the author, in emphasising the sinful state of the present order, persists in using the term 'original sin' which has led to so many errors and much uncharitableness. It is strange in a book, which in so many ways looks to a new orientation of Christian thought, to find a sentence like this: 'Here upon earth we have to bear the curse which forms part of the "expulsion from Paradise," a Divine reaction against our common, primal, historical apostasy from our Creator' (p. 401). The modern mind rightly ignores the so-called 'fall of man,' not because it is not true, but because the primal fall of man was insignificant compared with the greatness of his rise to humanity, and the two were contemporary aspects of one event.

The author has much that is excellent to say about law and legalism. The commandments of the Old and New Testaments were not legalistic, but were illustrations of how the one command to love God works out in practice. This point needs emphasising in our practical Christian life. Many of the problems of the present day, such as those of war and divorce, result from the fact that in the present sinful world it is not possible to follow the perfect law of love. We have a duty to society as it is, a duty to preserve it from chaos, which involves actions which would be reprehensible in the perfect state of love. Legalism is evil, law is evil, and is the sting of death: this paradox, expressed as St. Paul does it, is not only arresting but true. But laboured, as Professor Brunner labours it, it only remains true as a theorem but becomes untrue in practice. Outside the lecture room, in the world of life, the infinite variety of the ways of God can save even legalism from being utterly evil. Otherwise the Old Testament would never have been written, for its authors, or many of them, lived not under grace but under the law.

It will be seen from what has already been said that the author is at his best when he is dealing with purely abstract considerations. When he comes to their practical application he often makes mistakes through lack of knowledge. For instance, in dealing with capitalism he assumes that it necessarily implies a capitalist class, ignoring the fact that, at any rate in England, the working man is often himself a capitalist and has money invested in a Building Society or Savings Bank and thus indirectly invested in the same sort of industry for which he works as a wage-earner.

It is unfortunate that the original title of the book was not preserved, *The Commandment and the Ordinances: an outline of a Protestant theological Ethic*; for it explains the fact that, while all the statements are given as generalisations as if embracing all varieties of Christian life, actually the author has German Protestantism almost exclusively in view. This is seen for instance in the repeated quotation of the opinions of Luther and Calvin, which become rather wearisome to an English reader. Parti-

cularly in the section on the Church he deals almost exclusively with the problems as they appear in Germany. We hear almost nothing of the types of churchmanship represented by the Church of England, the Orthodox Churches, or the new Churches of the Mission Field. A knowledge of these would probably have modified much that he had to say. This is certainly the weakest part of the book, though by no means without value.

Miss Wyon is to be congratulated on her attempts to grapple with the unnecessary obscurity of a great deal of the language.

L. E. Browne.

## THE SAWING ASUNDER OF POLYCARP*

Some years ago Dr. Harrison published a penetrating study of the Pastoral Epistles which went far to settle the vexed question of their authorship. In the present volume he has made a contribution to the literature of the Ignatian Epistles which is scarcely less important.

In the reconstruction of the early period of Church History much depends upon the authenticity and date of the letters of Ignatius. If they are genuine, and if they are indeed to be dated before the death of Trajan, they furnish decisive testimony to the rapid development of the doctrine and organization of the Christian Church. They bear witness to the establishment of monarchical episcopacy, to the acceptance of a 'high' Christology, and to the currency of a belief in the Virgin Birth. But are they genuine and are they indeed so early? Much depends on the witness of Polycarp, for, as Dr. Harrison says, 'his epistle contains our earliest and indeed our only contemporary and decisive external testimony to the genuineness of our Ignatian Epistles, as well as to the fact that Polycarp made a collection of them.' But can we date the Epistle of Polycarp? It is a peculiarly perplexing problem, and Harnack changed his opinion more than once. In 1870 he said 'after 140,' in 1886 'after 130,' in 1897 '110-125,' and in 1920 he came right round to Lightfoot's opinion, and said 'Trajan's time.' The difficulty lies in the fact that all the evidence does not point in the same direction. On the one hand, he writes at a time when the news of the death of Ignatius has not arrived at Smyrna, and yet on the other hand his epistle seems to belong to a period considerably later than the letters of Ignatius. In the words of Dr. Harrison,

> 'There is a marked difference between their respective testimonies on such matters of fact as (a) the particular phase which had been reached in the growth of the New Testament, (b) the particular form of heresy which they describe as troubling the peace of the Church; to which we may add (c) the impression which they convey as to the age of Polycarp. On each of these questions the evidence afforded by Polycarp's Epistle seems to indicate a later and more advanced stage of development.'

* *Polycarp's Two Epistles to the Philippians.* By P. N. Harrison, D.D. (Cambridge University Press. 21/-. 1937.)

The contention of Dr. Harrison is that we have in a single document not one Epistle of Polycarp but two. The first epistle is contained in Chapter XIII, and perhaps chapter XIV; the second epistle, consisting of the first twelve chapters, is considerably later and reflects the situation when the name of Ignatius had become a blessed memory. It was no common thing for separate documents to be confused in this way, and in this case such a hypothesis helps to solve many difficulties. For instance, it explains why, although some passages belong to a time very shortly after the death of the martyr, others seem to suggest the spread of the Marcionite heresy, and would naturally be dated nearer to the middle than the beginning of the second century.

It is hardly possible to prove such a theory as this, but Dr. Harrison has made out an extremely strong case, and it is surprising that this solution of the problem had not been suggested before. A possible criticism is that the book is a little too elaborate, for the argument could have been more forcibly presented with less repetition and more conciseness of style; but as it stands it represents a first-rate contribution to scholarship which will have to be reckoned with in all subsequent attempts to reconstruct the history of the second century. The point on which there is still room for difference of opinion is the date of the death of Ignatius. This is discussed in Chapter XVII, but no very definite conclusion is arrived at. One minor point, is there any evidence that Marcion was ever called a Gnostic in the second century? (p. 243). P. GARDNER-SMITH.

## THE LOVE OF TRUTH*

The title of this lecture, *Veracity*, by the President of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, will appeal at once to English people, who pride themselves on the virtue of speaking the truth. But the effect of reading this lecture is not to increase our national self-approbation, but to reduce it. Some years ago Mr. Bernard Shaw shocked our self-satisfaction by pointing out how limited is our national conception of truth-speaking. He said that an Englishman is not taught to tell the truth; he is taught not to tell lies. Not to tell lies is a homely, even a pedestrian virtue, very useful in general society for the promotion of confidence, and especially valuable in a commercial community. But this is not the subject of Sir Richard Livingstone's lecture.

He writes about that much rarer virtue, the love of truth for its own sake, devotion to the search for truth, without regard to the unwillingness of the hearers to listen, or to the danger to the speaker himself. English people are on the whole far too practical in their habits of mind, far too unspeculative in their ways of thinking and too lazy-minded to provide many examples of this austere virtue. Nor, as a general rule, are they taught

* *Veracity*. By Sir Richard Livingstone. (The Lindsey Press. 1937. 1/-.)

the duty of speaking out a truth which they know to be unpalatable. More often they maintain a silence which is called discreet. The love of truth for its own sake is a virtue which is taught and valued in Universities, but the average Englishman has little idea what it means. Sir Richard Livingstone turns to another nation for his illustrations, and as a distinguished classical scholar he finds his most striking examples among the Greeks of the classical period. Greek literature shows a love of truth, a passion for knowing, which is unrivalled in other literatures, 'and their horror of ignorance leads to veracity . . . to a sensitive conscience and scrupulous practice in the intellectual life.'

This quality enabled them to achieve a tremendous work. When Greek history began, the Greeks were superstitious savages. But in three centuries, between 600 and 300 B.C., there 'was created something which had never existed before, a rational theory of life in all its departments, from cosmology to politics, from religion to style, from morals to poetry.' Sir Richard Livingstone gives three reasons for this splendid achievement. 'They desired knowledge, or rather wisdom, with an intensity and disinterestedness which have never been surpassed. They wished to see things as they are. They knew the temper in which controversy should be conducted.' He illustrates these three points by quotations. 'Contemplation and the freedom that comes from it are the ends of life.' 'The uncriticized life is not worth living.' 'We invite you to criticize our institutions without reserve. It is no insult to be told of something amiss. It gives one an opportunity to change it, if the criticism is accepted in good part and without resentment.'

If this virtue of veracity enabled the Greeks to achieve such stupendous results in all branches of knowledge, why is it that other nations have fallen so very far short of them? Sir Richard Livingstone gives two general reasons: 'First the atmosphere of a man's education and environment, which unconsciously distorts or limits his view, and from which no one entirely escapes; second the ever-watchful Self, attached to its own opinions, instinctively resentful of opposition to them.' Modern life shows other reasons; one is a false realism, which in contempt for easy optimism overemphasises the meanness and ugliness of life and insists that these are the essential reality; another is negativism, which spends itself in exposing errors but has no will to establish truth; and last, the sense of barrenness and bitterness which makes the pursuit of truth seem profitless. Ecclesiastes represents this type of mind. 'In much wisdom is much grief, and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow.' Another obstacle which to-day stands in the way, preventing people from gaining a devoted and disinterested love of truth, is the departmentalism of modern knowledge. Scientists show in their own special studies a devotion to truth which is not less than that of the Greeks. But the narrow limits of their studies make it more difficult for them to approach other provinces of knowledge in the same spirit.

In his concluding pages Sir Richard Livingstone asks the question: whence had the Greeks their desire to know? Some have said that its cause was a restless curiosity, others give it the more flattering name of wonder. Aristotle answers the question thus: 'What is peculiar to the nature of each creature is the best and pleasantest for it. Accordingly the life of the intellect is the best and the pleasantest for man, inasmuch as the intellect more than anything else is man.' On the other hand, Plato, a philosopher who was also a poet, says that the cause is the love of beauty. He agrees with Keats that 'Beauty is Truth, Truth Beauty,' and declares that 'the life which above all others a man should live is life in the contemplation of Absolute Beauty.' Neither of these standpoints is easily understandable to the typical Englishman, who tends to be both unintellectual and unaesthetic. A more intelligible outlook is expressed in the words of Bishop Butler: 'Things are what they are, and their consequences will be what they will be; why then should we wish to be deceived?'

But the love of truth and of beauty for their own sakes, which were so characteristic of Greek thought and which Sir Richard Livingstone has described and illustrated so admirably in this lecture, deserve much more careful cultivation than the average Englishman gives them. They should be specially cultivated by religious-minded men and women. For in the love of beauty we are loving God as He manifests Himself in His Creation; and in the disinterested search for truth we are proving ourselves to be His children, since God Himself is Truth. J. K. NETTLEFOLD.

## SOME PRACTICAL MYSTICS*

The Roman Catholic Church definitely uses the lives of its saints for purposes of religious teaching. This is a practice which the Reformed churches might adopt more frequently than they do. Saintship, presented not in abstract teaching but in the actual lives of men and women, is perhaps the most influential way of creating saints. The author of *They found God* presents the lives of eight Roman Catholic saints—examples of 'sheer spiritual strength . . . built up by years of entire selflessness and conquest of the lower nature.' Two of the eight lives are familiar to English readers, those of Catherine of Genoa and Heinrich Suso; the six others are probably unknown: Armelle, the Marquis of Renty, Marina of Escobar, Nicholas von der Flue, Maria Guyard and Anna Garcias.

That of Armelle, a domestic servant born in 1696, reminds us of the life of Brother Lawrence and his habit of practising the Presence of God. Armelle was a domestic servant all her life, not of necessity but because she felt in that sphere she could best serve God and man. She remarks:

> 'When I consider the great advantages of being a servant I cannot cease to praise God for making me one. No other state in the world would be so dear to me.'

* *They found God.* An account of some little-known Holy Lives by W. L. Christlieb. (Allen and Unwin. 1937. 5/-.)

After an illness, when Armelle became a little stronger, she was received into an Ursuline convent at Vennes as a lay servant, and it was a nun there who became her friend and then her biographer. When questioned by what means she had attained to such spiritual heights Armelle replied:

> 'You must ask Love, if you want to know about my life. For to love, and to love every day a little more, is the only art I know. Love taught me everything. During my work I talk with Him as with a friend; I love Him and rejoice in Him. Even when my work demands my whole attention my heart is always turned to Him. When the work is finished I hurry back to Him. He taught me that as long as I looked towards Him I should not sin, nor cease to love Him. He gave me a greater desire to fulfil my duties as a domestic servant than to enjoy meditation and prayer. Indeed I found Him much better at my work than at the wrong time in church. To keep to my converse with God was my real and ceaseless, as it were my only duty, within or beneath all other duties . . . In those former years there was frequently not enough leisure throughout the whole day even to say an "Our Father." But this did not trouble me: working for Him pleased me as much as speaking to Him in prayer. He taught me that all I do out of love for Him is true prayer.'

What a valuable parishioner Armelle was and what might not our church life become in this land if we had even one Armelle in each parish the following extract will indicate:

> 'On Sundays and other holy days I was allowed to attend church, but afterwards had to work the whole day in the house. During the sermon I listened with such reverence and attention as if God Himself were speaking. I prayed for all my fellow-listeners that His word might be fruitless with none of them. For the preacher too I asked for power to move our hearts to the love of God.'

The Marquis of Renty is another lay saint born somewhat earlier than Armelle (1611) and in a château in Normandy. It was the sight of a crucifix that converted Armelle but the reading of a book, *The Imitation of Christ*, that converted Renty. While living the court life of a French nobleman and taking part in campaigns in the thirty years' war, he managed to spend many hours daily at prayer in the coldest weather in unheated rooms. He organized relief works for the poor and fed them at his own table and learned basket work so as to be able to teach the unemployed a trade. Not only did he help in the erection of hospitals, the founding of seminaries and philanthropic societies but he gave personal service, nursed sick people, visited prisons and slums and studied medicine and surgery so as to relieve suffering. Like Wesley, it was because of his 'method' that Renty was able to achieve so much. He wrote to his Confessor:

> 'From all sides the claims of work call me. I do all I can, in its own time, without hurry. Our Lord gives me the grace of keeping me in His peace. I find this: the more I plan and arrange to do a great deal in this place or that, the less gets done. But if I commit all my work to God much more gets done. Therefore I will let Him work.'

To a friend who was sympathising with Renty about various annoyances and even insults to which he was subjected Renty remarked:

> 'We have to conquer ourselves till nothing is a self-denial any more.'

Nicholas von der Flue (born in Switzerland in 1417) when middle-aged felt, like Tolstoi, the call to leave home and seek God in solitude, but, unlike Tolstoi, Nicholas von der Flue would do nothing without first consulting his wife. After many talks together she consented to his following the inner call. He then said goodbye to his wife, the ten children and his relations, and set forth clad as a poor pilgrim, bare footed, bare headed, carrying no bundle nor any money and getting to as lonely a spot as possible. He built himself a cell where he lived for twenty years, consulted by all sorts of people, learned and unlearned, as a wise man.

Maria Guyard, born in 1599, a widow at nineteen, led a God-conscious life in the midst of a busy world where she had to earn her own living and maintain her son, who when he was grown-up persuaded his mother to write her autobiography.

> 'I was always so happy among the people with whom my business lay that they thought I found a peculiar pleasure in their society. But what really made me gay and merry was the hidden union with God . . . Sometimes I had no less than twenty of my brother's labourers round me. I sat down at table with them to have an opportunity of speaking to them about their souls . . .'

When her son was twelve years old Maria Guyard entered a convent. Some days later the son and some of his companions stormed the convent in a vain endeavour to get her to return to secular life. But there Maria remained until the age of about thirty-five, when with some other nuns she went to Canada as a missionary to the Indians. There, after much suffering and unwearying efforts a convent was finally built only to be burnt down. The following is a description of what the little community felt when they saw all their work perishing in flames:

> 'Our whole community stood at a little distance in the snow, meek and silent, as if nothing were happening. They were praying. A man said to them, "Either you must be fools or else full of the love of God that you can remain so unmoved while all your possessions are burning." The good man did not know the strength Jesus was sending into our hearts. For myself I can say I never felt a greater joy than on this occasion. My mind was quite undisturbed by any sadness or distress, I felt extraordinarily happy and kept on saying to the Lord, "It is Thy doing! We praise Thee for all Thy ways!" My soul was at peace in that His will was being done, His will that we stood there with nothing, His will that I who had carried through the building with many troubles and under great contradictions against myself, and had brought it to its present state, now saw it perish.'

The convent was rebuilt and Maria Guyard's missionary work continued until her death at the age of seventy-three after terrible suffering borne with incredible patience, for

'all the time, in the ground of my being, I am as it were lost in God by a union, an intercourse, an intimacy which I find no words to describe.'

Anna Garcias is another of those who determined to live the spiritual life and so banish fear. She was the friend and servant of St. Teresa for fourteen years till St. Teresa died. In her middle life Anna Garcias' biography was written at the command of her Confessor. She was born into a religious home in 1549, the daughter of a farmer and the youngest of a happy family. When she was ten years old her parents died and Anna was sent into the fields, where like Joan of Arc she saw visions and dreamed dreams. After a great deal of opposition from her brother, who had made her work hard on the farm in an effort to expel her mystical experiences, which he considered harmful, Anna finally entered the convent of Abila (which was the first that St. Teresa founded) and became a lay sister there. After some years there came to Anna a very strong inward impression that she must leave Abila and go into France. Though by this time accustomed to a life of adventure, for she had travelled much in the company of St. Teresa, yet Anna hated the idea of starting work in a new country at the age of fifty-four. 'For this convent of Abila,' she says, 'was truly a house of God where all loved one another, even me who was of all the most unworthy.'

On August 29th, 1603, Anna Garcias with three nuns started on their journey and, with many adventures on the way, did not arrive at Paris until the following April. Here her superiors insisted upon Anna taking the black veil, and only eight days after her profession she was sent to Pontoise to start a new convent with herself as prioress.

'Once I complained to God and asked why did He leave me in this office? seeing how poor I was, and nothing, just an empty straw. He answered, "With straws I light fires."'

At Pontoise Anna was a great success, so much so that when an order came for her to go as Prioress to Paris the town-people planned to hinder her departure by force, so she had to depart secretly by night. After three years in Paris Anna was sent to Tours to found a new convent there, and then again after three years she was recalled to Paris. Anna was now sixty-two years old, but in a year or so she had still another new foundation to begin — this time at Bergen in Hennigau, where she died in 1626 after prolonged ill-health. Here is some of the advice Anna gave her community:

'It is silence which makes a soul receptive for communion and intercourse with God. Through silence one grows wise: for one hears the Lord speaking inwardly: to listen to Him is to learn wisdom.'

'The reason why so few become truly spiritual is, as Bonaventura says, this, that they will not train themselves to listen to the voice of God. If they do not find any taste in prayer they soon give it up and seek consolation elsewhere.'

The sources for this volume of hagiology are derived from Gerhard Tersteegen's *Leben Heiliger Seelen,* published in 1735. M.E.M.

## EXISTENTIAL CHRISTIANITY*

Mr. Chaning-Pearce writes as 'a "common" man to "common" men and women' and though he has both read and thought, he disclaims the title of professional theologian or philosopher. The outcome is a book of Christian apologetic of much freshness and interest. It is not always very clear and the common man may find several sentences too involved to be easily comprehensible at a first reading, and the purist may jib a little at such a phrase as 'real reality.' Yet by the honesty, sincerity and vigour of the book, its high title *Religion and Reality* finds justification. It is to be expected rightly from the sub-title, 'An essay in the Christian co-ordination of contraries,' that the argument will follow a dialectical mode. Such dialectic has the advantage of lending itself to a forceful and interesting expression of views but it presents a grave difficulty when it comes to presenting a convincing synthesis, not to mention the initial difficulty of selecting the thesis and antithesis and keeping both distinct from the synthesis.

Mr. Chaning-Pearce judges that the fundamental conflict of the modern man is between his heart and his head, 'a dualism in the world of thought which is rapidly becoming a disastrous dyarchy in the world of action.' In theology this dualism is manifest in the conflict between the Christ of Faith and the Jesus of History. The writer portrays the view of the extreme left-wing critics—what is practically a Christ-myth view with full emphasis on eschatology and world-renunciation. In some passages the writer would seem to criticise this view on ordinary grounds, but in the the main he seems either to accept it or leave it aside, arguing that this is all naturalism can say but Christianity by its very nature appeals to a supernatural revelation of its truth. The Kingdom of God and the Christ of Faith claim, *ex hypothesi,* to be beyond the order of nature. This may be contrary to 'common sense' but it does 'ring real.' To prepare for this position the book has an earlier chapter on the Existential Judgment, in which it is emphasised—to put the argument briefly and crudely—that in ordinary life men do not rely on a purely logical judgment but on an activity of the whole *psyche,* inclusive both of feeling and intuition. With the ground thus prepared the writer can argue by analogy from the experience of the lover and the artist to the religious experience, and he is not least interesting in such passages. Mr. Chaning-Pearce does not deny the findings of the logical judgment or its place in human activity, but he calls in a new world to redress the balance of the old; he holds bravely that we must live in the two worlds enduring the contradictions but able and allowed to find in Christ the co-ordination of the opposites. In this earthly life we experience this reconciliation only in part and at times. Indeed a dualism is rooted in the depth of our life, the ultimate conflict between our

* *Religion and Reality*. By Melville Chaning-Pearce. (Macmillan. 187 pp. 7/6. 1937.)

spirits and the confinement of their earthly tabernacle. The author 'gets across' this tension of living. One regrets that more space is not given to the normal criticism of the extreme critics by one who sees many of the weaknesses and improbabilities in their case. It is also a striking omission in a book which depends intellectually so much on the theory of judgment that the whole philosophy of value is not so much as mentioned.

Not the least interesting part of this book, as the expression of the lay mind, is the way it cuts across the 'party lines.' Modernist in many ways, it attacks modernism which the author seems to regard as a mere humanism—a view apparently based on a hypothetical paragraph in an occasional essay of Dr. Major, which does not at all represent Dr. Major's position as an historical critic of the Gospels. If there is something in the book of 'the flight from reason,' no refuge is sought in an external ecclesiastical authority, rather reliance is placed on the existence or common sense judment of the ordinary man—a good English line. Again, though the writer discards old views of inspiration, much accepted views of creeds, and pictures of a 'liberal' Jesus, this book has a genuine evangelical fervour, a faith which is passion. Such a contribution, as is this book, from a Christian layman is a matter for sincere gratitude—none the less sincere because one may not always be convinced. If it leads other laymen to consider yet again our ancient faith and students to remember that religion is not an intellectual study but of the substance of life and living, it will have performed a useful service. H.G.M.

## THE IMPERIAL PEACE *

Nearly half a century has now elapsed since the great Lord Acton planned the Cambridge Modern History. The success of this vast undertaking suggested the design of an Ancient and a Mediæval History to link up the first beginnings of human prehistory with the twentieth century. The bridge of prodigious length is now approaching completion; this volume is the penultimate tier of the ancient section; the next will join on with the Mediæval History, which begins with the reign of Diocletian. It is a magnificent conception, even if the execution is, as must needs be the case with the work of many hands, unequal. Some there may be who would prefer the more classical design conceived by the brain and executed by the hand of Edward Gibbon, or the neat tubular bridge across the ages of Mr. H. G. Wells' *Outline*. But the mass of facts at our disposal and the growth of specialization, imperatively demand a division of labour. It is to the honour of the University of Cambridge that with self-effacing altruism they have called for collaborators from every land.

This international commentary on history produces at times a somewhat *bizarre* effect. We are conscious of a change when we pass from the lucid narrative of Mr. Charlesworth, who has treated of the Flavians, and Mr.

* *The Cambridge Ancient History*. Volume II, *The Imperial Peace*, A.D. 70—192. (Cambridge University Press. 1936 35/-.)

Longden, who has written of Trajan, to the turgid style of Wilhelm Weber, Professor of Ancient History in the University of Berlin, to whom is assigned the reigns of Hadrian, the Antonines, and Commodus. We can only suppose that some of the sentences are clearer in the original German. And it is not only the manner but the matter which makes us rub our eyes. Take for example his estimate of Commodus.

> 'What he did seemed the monstrous abuse of power only to those who clung to the old world. It was, in fact, a new type of the pure man, and the devout ruler, an invasion of an alien strength and an alien attitude, the first triumph of the oriental and barbarian alike, which found its instrument in this last of the Spanish lines' (p. 389).

It was certainly a novel idea to us that anybody could consider Commodus in any sense 'a pure man'; we had always thought that he was the most unspeakable ruffian who ever disgraced the human form, though, to be sure, much may be forgiven to the son of one so unspeakably virtuous as Marcus Aurelius.

Thoroughly sound and exceedingly interesting are the chapters on the various provinces East and West, among which we may especially single out Mr. Collingwood's account of Roman Britain. Mr. Sikes' chapter on the Latin literature of the Silver Age illustrates the difficulty of writing for a mixed audience. His account of the later Latin writers must seem, we think, sometimes a little trite and obvious to the small minority who know their Juvenal and Martial, and more than a little recondite and elusive to that large majority of educated moderns who do not. Dare we venture to suggest that some of the quotations might have been translated? For example, a line from Martial is quoted, an inscription for a present of Lucan's works,

*Sed qui vendit bibliopola putat.*

Does *bibliopola* mean a bestseller?

Occasionally we note a dogmatic tone; assertions are made for which, no doubt, good evidence exists, but it is not produced for the benefit of the reader. For example, on page 134 we read, 'There is no foundation for the belief that Italian recruiting ceases with Vespasian.' The note below says, 'As held by Mommsen and developed by Rostovtzeff.' Now there may be, we understand that there is, good reason for setting aside the opinion in this matter of such capital authorities as Mommsen and Rostovtzeff, but surely some outline at least of the evidence for such a judgment ought to have been given.

This division of history into ancient, mediæval, and modern, though doubtless convenient, is arbitrary and unscientific; it is like dividing the habitable world into England, Scotland, and foreign parts. To class all cultures before the fourth century A.D. under the term 'ancient' is, strictly speaking, as fatuous as the use of the term 'antediluvian' to cover all extinct fauna from the pterodactyl to the mammoth. The Middle Ages were our own youth. Before the emergence of Christian civilisation there had

flourished, mainly around the shores of the Mediterranean, a culture which is known to us from its beginning to its end. It is the rise and fall of this phase of human life which is the main subject of the Cambridge Ancient History. Christianity, though it arose in this environment and was profoundly influenced by it, was essentially not of it; it held within it the germ of the future. Modern Churchmen will read Chapter VII on the rise of Christianity with pride and regret—pride that one of our number should have been chosen from among all the scholars of the world to write this most important chapter, and profound regret for the passing of a mind fearless and eminently judicious in the sense in which that term was applied to Hooker. Dr. Streeter says in his introduction to his chapter on the rise of Christianity,

> 'The death of Marcus Aurelius in A.D. 180 is for Gibbon the beginning of decline and fall in the Roman Empire. The same date may, as suitably, be taken to mark the emergence into the clear daylight of history of that highly organized World-Church which was destined to survive, and in the West to supplant, the World-State that was crumbling into ruin . . . . Already within a century and a half of the Crucifixion it had become in essential features an ecclesiastical State with a culture fundamentally different from, and in certain ways inimical to, that inherited by the Empire from the city-states of Greece and Rome' (p. 253).

Dr. Streeter begins by an analysis and appraisal of the evidence, Roman, Jewish, and Christian, for the early history of the Church. The two former occupy but little space. 'The grand introduction, so to speak, of the Church to the notice of the World' was the Neronian persecution.

> 'A group of proletarians, condemned by an emperor for the stupendous crime of setting fire to the capital of the world, was necessarily from henceforth a secret society suspected by the police. Thus we should not expect to find Roman evidence of the doings of Christians except in the equivalent of what in modern times we should call "Police Court News"; and precisely in the few surviving allusions to police measures or *causes célèbres* do we find references to Christianity.'

Tacitus is aware that Christ, unlike other cult-deities, is an historical character of recent date; the Roman historian bears witness to one article of the Creed, that He suffered under Pontius Pilate.

The early history of the *civitas Dei* is divided by Dr. Streeter into two periods. For three quarters of a century there is intense spiritual vitality and experiment; then follows a time of conservation and consolidation. To the first period, we are told, belongs the greater part of our New Testament, beginning with the letters of St. Paul (A.D. 50 to 64), *I* and *II Thessalonians, Galatians, I* and *II Corinthians, Romans, Philippians, Colossians* and *Philemon,* perhaps *Ephesians,* but only some fragments (mostly embodied in *II Timothy*) of the Epistles to Timothy and Titus. *Mark* is dated A.D. 65, before the destruction of Jerusalem; Q, the lost document of the sayings of our Lord, is probably earlier still. The dates which can

reasonably be assigned to *Matthew* and *Luke* vary between 80 and 100 A.D. The great formative period ends with the *Gospel of St. John,* 'a mystical and theological interpretation of the life and teaching of Christ.' 'The fourth Gospel marks the end of the great age of Christianity; it is the last of the giants in the greatest religious revival in the history of man. To turn from this Gospel to the *Epistle of Jude* is to feel a big drop, spiritually and intellectually.' The good old man who wrote this diatribe, profoundly shocked by the appearance of antinomian heresies, exhorts his readers 'to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints.' These words might almost be called the slogan of the central section of the Church during the next hundred years. We may say it has been its slogan ever since.

Along with the standardization of doctrine there went a growth of bureaucracy; the prophet gave place to the bishop. Internal discipline, no doubt, was a vital necessity for a society under the ban of the law and struggling for existence amid the rank growth of new religions stimulated by the hot breath of the East. A curious parallel is the ever increasing insistence on strict Marxian orthodoxy, the savage heresy-hunts within the Third International, the ever-growing authority of the Pope of the Kremlin. This new tendency, Dr. Streeter points out, finds its culminating expression in the *Adversus Haereses* of Irenaeus, *c.* A.D. 186.

> 'What Irenaeus represents is not Apostolic Christianity, but rather a critical stage in a process of standardization of beliefs and institutions, which continued to be carried on by oecumenical councils and afterwards by the Papacy, and of which the logical culmination was the Infallibility Decree of 1870.'

This volume deals with the late Summer of ancient civilisation, the Antonine Age, which corresponds, perhaps, with that culminating phase of our own culture which we Englishmen rather arrogantly call Victorian. In August, 1914, the present writer said to the Editor of the *Modern Churchman,* 'The Antonine Age is over; now begins the rule of the military tyrants.' So far, unfortunately, events seem to have justified his anticipations. If the future gives the lie to his apprehensions, so much the better for us all. At any rate, we trust that no cataclysm will prevent the publication of the last volume, which is to treat of the third century, the most obscure and not the least important epoch in human history.

GAMALIEL MILNER.

## EAST AND WEST AT PRAYER*

Perhaps owing to the disturbed state of the world, there exists to-day a widespread interest in prayer—its theory and practice. Life presents increasingly difficult problems for many people, and they seek a technique for coping with them. The educated classes, so long as they retain their health,

* *Christ and Prayer.* By C. F. Andrews. (S.C.M. Press. 3/6.) *Systems of Meditation in Religion.* By W. Loftus Hare. (Philip Allan. 8/6.)

use work or sport as an anodyne; but many of them would gladly pray if they could; but as their prayer technique has remained stationery since childhood, they find it difficult or impossible.

Such not too hopeful seekers may find themselves looking into one or other of the two volumes before us. The Rev. C. F. Andrews is widely known as a Christian teacher who has won the confidence and affection of many Indians, and can count as his personal friends such distinguished men as Gandhi, the Sadhu Sundar Singh, and the poet Tagore. Though he acknowledges his debt to India, Mr. Andrews has not slipped into the theosophist abyss, but has remained a Christian. He has much to say in these pages which is both interesting and important. The material of the book was delivered as lectures to young students in Africa and Ceylon, but it is written from a personal standpoint, and what is said is evidently based on personal experience, and this gives the book its value, because what we want is for someone to tell us how to go to work. Take the following passage:

> 'The queston may be asked, "How do you begin to pray when you are all alone?"
>
> 'First of all I spend some moments in complete and utter stillness, remaining seated in such a manner that the body becomes no clog or hindrance to the spirit, and a sense of outward restfulness is attained. The inner stillness comes, however, not through any mechanical means, but through that quiet and peace of the soul when all is surrendered to God. My earlier mistake was to begin almost immediately with petition and thoughts of one's own needs, instead of resting in the Lord and waiting patiently for Him in thankfulness and worship. Now that I have begun to learn this lesson, I remain in stillness for a much longer time until the spirit within is composed and I am thus prepared to receive from God His own message for the day . . .
>
> 'It is essential to be the master and not the slave of moods when we thus pray and worship. For if we cease to pray whenever we do not feel in the mood for it, we shall soon cease altogether. In the active life of the world we do not depend on our moods. We do things when we are least inclined to do them, and the right mood comes only when we make the effort. We must deal with our prayer life in a similar manner.'

Mr. Loftus Hare's book differs both in character and aim from that of Mr. Andrews. In it we find 'a survey of religious practice found in almost all the principal faiths of mankind.' There is provided here a summary of the various, though not dissimiliar, doctrines and practices of religious traditions ranging from Plotinus to Wordsworth, and from India to Spain. The work is more a treatise in comparative religion than a would-be devotee's *vade mecum*. Yet the individual who wishes to know how to pray will learn from this volume what are some of the classics of the life of religion that are likely to help him. And he will be encouraged by a clear realization that prayer is as natural and normal a human activity as love-making. There need be nothing self-righteous or self-conscious about such a practice. J.C.H.

## FOR HONEST DOUBTERS*

The author of this remarkable book is a well-known scholar of the Old Testament and Judaism. Apologies for Christianity to Jews (as to Muslims) have in the past most often stressed the non-essentials. Dr. Lukyn Williams states quite clearly that Old Testament prophecies do not prove that Jesus is the Messiah, and His miracles do not prove that He is divine. Clearing away such arguments leaves one free to offer the real reasons for our faith in Jesus as Messiah and Lord, and this the author does with vigour and conviction, sustaining all the time the interest of the reader. One can feel confident that the use of this book will increase the steady stream of Jews who are finding salvation in Jesus Christ. Not only so, but being convinced by sound reasons, they or their descendants will be free from the disaster that might follow when faulty arguments come to be exposed. The reviewer remembers a converted Jew who tried to convert his fellow Jews by assuring them that the Trinity was taught in the first three letters of the Hebrew Bible, beth, resh and aliph, standing for the Hebrew words for 'Son,' 'Spirit' and 'God.' One would tremble for the soundness or the sanity of converts (if any) won by such means.

Next we believe this book will prove exceedingly useful for Christian readers, particularly students, who are seeking the true grounds of their own faith. The new knowledge, which frightens many, is seen to make room for sounder reasons than the old reasons which are found to be faulty.

Finally, though the book as it stands would scarcely serve for the use of Muslims, it should be of great service to those who are writing for Muslims as indicating true lines of presenting the Gospel. A certain Continental Church a few years ago ejected a minister for refusing to take literally the serpent in the Garden of Eden. Yet that Church has been one of the most successful in winning Muslim converts. How can such converts be saved from disaster in the future?

The reviewer, who is acquainted with a great deal of the Christian literature put out for non-Christians, can say that this book is quite outstanding; and because it is based on sound knowledge and Christian experience it will have a far wider field of usefulness than the Jews for whom it is primarily intended.

L. E. BROWNE.

## RATIONALIST IRRATIONALISM†

The purpose of this little book is made clear by the following quotation:

> 'Belief in the humanity of Jesus was created by the Gospels. The proposition to be dealt with is that before the publication of a Gospel Jesus was no less a divine being than Dionysus.'

* A. Lukyn Williams, D.D.: *The Foundations of the Christian Faith*, a book for honest thinkers, whether Jews or Christians. (Heffer. 1935. 3/6.)

† *The Christian Tradition* By L. Gordon Rylands, B.A., B.Sc. (Watts and Co. 1/-. 1937.)

The Gospels of Mark and John themselves, he thinks support this view for in them

> 'Jesus appears suddenly with no antecedent history. The reasonable presumption is that for the writers of those two Gospels the divine being, like the great High Priest of the Epistle to the Hebrews, was without father or mother.'

Later in the book he tries to meet the objection to this view raised by those who say 'that Jesus must have been human since he had a mother and brothers who were well known.' A brief examination of how he does this will give us a good idea of Mr. Ryland's critical methods and the value of them. He says that the only place in *Mark* where Mary is mentioned as the mother of Jesus (*i.e. Mark* v, 3) is a late interpolation. The reason he gives for this rather surprising statement is that 'in another place' (presumably *Mark* xv 40 though he does not give the reference) 'we read of Mary the mother of Joses and Salome.' This is a bad blunder, for anyone who looks at the Greek of *Mark* xv 40 can see at once that the Mary there mentioned is not described as the mother of Salome. To make matters worse he goes on to say

> 'The solitary statement in this Gospel that Jesus was the son of Mary the mother of James and Joses and Judas and Salome deserves no credit.'

Now in *Mark* vi, 3 there is no mention of Salome but only of unnamed sisters. Surely a writer who deals in so reckless a fashion with the passages to which he refers deserves no credit.

Equally unconvincing is his attempt to explain away the description of James as 'the Lord's brother' (*Galatians* i 19) by saying that since all Christians were called 'brethern,' the word brother is here used in a figurative sense. Surely it is obvious that the words 'the Lord's brother' are used to distinguish this James from other Christian Jameses, so that unless the words were meant to be taken literally, they are meaningless. Enough has been said to show that in our opinion this is a worthless little book, which no scholars need take seriously, but it may prove dangerous in the hands of the half educated who have not sufficient knowledge to detect how rash and unwarranted many of the writer's dogmatic statements are.

E.R.B.

# CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor of *The Modern Churchman*

## CHRISTOPHER PHILIP GODWIN ROSE.

SIR,

It is fitting that Modernists living south of London should give witness to their sense of loss at the death of the Rev. C. P. G. Rose, who was a staunch and old member of the Modern Churchmen's Union. He died after a short illness, having spent his last two years in parochial work, as Vicar of Cobham. Before that he had passed his ministerial life in the Royal Navy. His great attention to detail was shown in the personal and intimate knowledge he made it his business to obtain of every man who came aboard the ship in which he was serving, and by the intense trouble he took over the preparation and revision of his sermons before they were finally delivered.

As a regular and enthusiastic member of the Modern Churchmen's conferences he was well known to a large circle of friends. His wide sympathies led him to lose no opportunity of fostering good-will between Anglicans and Free Churchmen, and his parishioners appreciated his efforts to the full. It remains for his friends to bear in mind his fearless sincerity, and, in the same spirit of unfailing charity, as he always displayed, to use their persistent endeavours to bring ecclesiastical custom more fully into line with the love of Christ, which, wide as the ocean, knows no bounds.

Those of us who lived near enough to allow interchange of ideas and to make friendship possible will miss his good fellowship both in work and play. *'He was a verray parfit gentil knight.'*

R. GLADSTONE GRIFFITH.

Farnborough Rectory, Kent.
*Nov. 1st, 1937.*

## WHAT IS RELIGIOUS BELIEF?

SIR,

In all the discussions that have taken place as to what should or should not be contained in a creed, there has been, so far as I am aware, no analysis of the meaning of the word 'Belief' or of its implications, and yet this must be important. Probably it is such a well known word that people think its exact meaning must be clear to everyone and it is just in such cases that there are hidden ambiguities.

Firstly, belief is less than knowledge; the use of the word shows that the statement believed in is not absolutely proved, or even if probable, that the probability is not of such a high degree (say 1,000 to 1) that the chance of its falsehood may be neglected.

But belief is not a purely intellectual statement that something is probably true, it is a personal judgment that it is true.

The kinds of evidence that may lead a man to such a judgment are so varied that I cannot go into them, but can only say they may contain personal experiences (including desires) which can not be shared by others; also different people will attribute different weight to the same piece of evidence. But however convincing the evidence may be to the person concerned, it is not convincing to all reasonable people, for then we should call it knowledge and not merely belief.

And the less critical a person is the more easily can he form a judgment on insufficient evidence.

But belief must imply something further when one finds in the prayer book such words as 'steadfastly believes' and still more when one 'promises to believe' something in the future. This can only mean that one must concentrate one's attention on the favourable evidence and shut one's eyes to the unfavourable, no matter what fresh evidence may arise.

Intellectually this is dishonest, the honest course being to suspend judgment, and yet as one finds that it has been done for centuries by the best of men, there must be some justification for it.

To find this I think one must turn to the practical side of life. Men must act although they are uncertain as to how they should act. Take as our example a doctor called in to a patient and uncertain as to what is the illness from which the man is suffering. He must judge what seems the most probable and then treat his patient on that assumption. It is no use for him to suspend judgment; whether right or wrong he must form his opinion and act on it.

I think this may be taken as a symbolical picture of the position of man generally. Man does not know if there is a future life, he does not know if there is a loving God behind the universe and there are many other uncertainties, not to mention all in the material world of which he is ignorant. And yet the way in which he should act depends on these uncertainties, and he has to decide on what hypothesis he must base his action.

He may be able to say that one seems more probable than its reverse and base his actions on it, but even if he cannot do this, he still has to choose his basis of action.

A seemingly reverse process also takes place, if there are two courses of action open, one of which he desires and the other of which he dislikes, he may justify his action by adopting the hypothesis which leads to the course he desires.

But however it comes about, there is the closest relation between action and the judgment of uncertainties.

Logically there is no connection between adopting a hypothesis as the basis of action and believing it to be absolutely true, but I think that this is what has actually taken place and the two ideas have been fused together.

There are many reasons for this: until the last few centuries there was little sound proof of anything beyond the well known facts of daily experience: anything further was a matter of opinion and so the boundary between certainty and uncertainty was very hazy.

Also when acting on a given hypothesis it is no use always keeping its possible falsehood before one, for without considerable mental courage this tends to paralyse action, and to continue on a given hypothesis tends (though quite illogically) to create a belief in its truth.

At the present day probably the majority do not separate the ideas of belief in something and its adoption as a basis of action. So that the sayings 'that a man believes what he desires' or that 'you can judge a man by his beliefs' are frequently true.

To size up this part of my argument: I think the belief inculcated in religion is really a judgment as to what should be our basis of action and has illogically absorbed the idea of intellectually believing that basis to be absolutely true.

In the past this did not do much harm, but modern science has succeeded in proving many things so abstruse that formerly they were considered unproveable, and has raised the standard needed to justify a belief. It is so careful in this way that it admits that its most brilliant concepts may or may not correspond to the underlying reality, though it uses them as the basis of action.

The effect of this is that many people now can and do separate the two ideas. A modern Spanish writer, Quintero, makes one of his characters say: 'We do not know if God exists, but live as if he does.'

Thus many people who hope and trust that there is a loving God and a future life and who try to base their actions and life on Christian ideals cannot honestly say they *believe* and so are forced to keep outside organizations the entrance to which is barred by that word believe. And when they remain outside many more, who always follow like sheep, remain outside also.

I cannot help thinking that some other word or phrase is needed to take the place of 'believe,' and that until this is done no alteration or simplification of the creeds, though necessary, will fully meet the case.

J. H. Hume-Rothery.

Mendip House,
Headington Hill, Oxford.